



3 1761 05334876 9

PR  
4832  
H599



The J. C. Saul Collection  
of  
Nineteenth Century  
English Literature

Purchased in part  
through a contribution to the  
Library Funds made by the  
Department of English in  
University College.

KEATS  
HYPERION, ISABELLA  
THE EVE OF ST. AGNES  
LAMIA

EDITED BY  
G. E. HOLLINGWORTH, M.A. Lond.



London: W. B. CLIVE  
University Tutorial Press Ltd  
High St., New Oxford St., W.C.



25  
K257h1a

KEATS  
HYPERION, ISABELLA  
THE EVE OF ST. AGNES  
LAMIA

EDITED BY

G. E. HOLLINGWORTH, M.A. LOND.

AUTHOR OF "A PRIMER OF LITERARY CRITICISM"

EDITOR OF ARNOLD: SOHRAB AND RUSTUM, THE SCHOLAR GIPSY, THYRSIS



379247  
19.4.40

LONDON : W. B. CLIVE

University Tutorial Press Ltd.

HIGH ST., NEW OXFORD ST., W.C.

PR  
4832  
H599

# CONTENTS.

INTRODUCTION—	PAGE
Keats's Life ... ..	v
Keats's Character and Aims ... ..	vii
Keats's Age ... ..	x
The Classical Element in Keats ... ..	xi
Keats's Works and Models ... ..	xi
 HYPERION ... ..	 1
NOTES ON <i>Hyperion</i> ... ..	29
 ISABELLA ... ..	 41
THE EVE OF ST. AGNES ... ..	61
 LAMIA ... ..	 75
NOTES ON <i>Isabella</i> ... ..	97
NOTES ON <i>The Eve of St. Agnes</i> ... ..	102
NOTES ON <i>Lamia</i> ... ..	106





## INTRODUCTION.

---

**Keats's Life.**—John Keats (b. 1795), like many other great writers, came of an undistinguished family: his father, a stableman, married his master's daughter; and John, the first child, was born in the mews at Moorfields. Since his father was perhaps of Cornish descent, it is possible that in Keats, as in many other English poets, there was a Celtic strain. John, and later his brothers George and Tom, attended the school of the Rev. John Clarke at Enfield, where he received a sound general education, though he did not show any exceptional talent except for fighting boys bigger than himself—not, like the heroes of school-tales, in chivalrous defence of bullied weaklings, but from sheer quarrelsomeness.

In the last eighteen months of his school life, however, he turned studious, read at meal-times, did holiday tasks, devoured dictionaries of classical mythology, and became friendly with Charles Cowden Clarke, his schoolmaster's son, who afterwards became a literary man of some standing and who continued to foster Keats's love of poetry after the boy left school. This he did at the age of fifteen, his father and his mother being then both dead—the mother, of consumption. Keats was apprenticed to a surgeon, but left him before the close of the apprenticeship, and took to walking St. Thomas's Hospital; he passed the usual examination in 1815, and became a dresser at Guy's Hospital.

But his heart had never been in his work; in 1812 he had borrowed Spenser's *Faery Queene* from Cowden Clarke, read it all with the utmost enthusiasm, and became more and more determined to be a poet. Through Cowden

Clarke he had come to know Leigh Hunt, the essayist, critic, and poet, editor of *The Examiner*, who had recently served two years' imprisonment for referring to the Prince Regent as a fat Adonis of forty. Probably in the youthful eyes of Keats this charming champion of liberty was a hero; certainly he had a great influence, not always good, upon Keats's early poetry. Through Hunt, too, Keats became acquainted with Haydon, the noble-minded but unpractical painter of very large historical pictures, with Reynolds, a poet now forgotten, and with Ollier, the publisher, who in 1817 issued Keats's first volume of poems. In 1817, too, and the next year, Keats visited the Isle of Wight, Margate, Oxford, Stratford-on-Avon, Leatherhead, Dorking, and Teignmouth, returning to Hampstead, his permanent quarters, at intervals, and busying himself with the writing of *Endymion*, for which he had already found a publisher willing to advance a considerable sum on account. It will be seen, then, that Keats, so far from being a cockney poet in mean circumstances, had passed a good part of his time in the country, and had found his private fortune sufficient to provide for him comfortably while he made his first essays in poetry.

In April 1818 *Endymion* was published, and two months later Keats set off on a pedestrian tour with a friend, Charles Armitage Brown, starting from Liverpool, where they had seen George Keats off to settle in America, and travelling through the Lake country, the Burns country, Belfast, and the Western Highlands. Keats, with his customary energy and ardour—an energy and ardour too often characteristic of incipient consumption—frequently walked twenty miles or more a day and “roughed it” in a way most unwise for one whose health had already given cause for anxiety. In Scotland, however, after wading through miles of bog, and trying in vain to throw off the resulting chill, he gave up the tour and returned home—only to find his brother Tom dying of consumption. For three months Keats nursed his brother devotedly, thereby probably sealing his own fate.

After the death of Tom, he set up house with Armitage Brown at Hampstead, and divided his attention between poetry and love for a Miss Brawne. He became engaged, but found no happiness: his sensitiveness made him absurdly angry at the rather tasteless chaff of his friends; his gathering ill-health increased his irritability. Miss Brawne, who was five years his junior, appears to have been a perfectly normal girl, light-hearted and perhaps occasionally inclined to tease, but genuinely attached to him, though incapable of his own fierce passion. The poet was jealous and unhappy; sure that he neither deserved nor had her love; angry that she did not (as he thought) give it.

His misery and the excitement aroused by the reception of *Endymion*—which was most scurrilously assailed in *The Quarterly Review* and *Blackwood's Magazine* by the political opponents of Hunt—probably hastened his death; but it is as untrue to say that he was killed by his critics as to say that he died of love. He had a serious breakdown in February 1820 and, though he rallied, it was only for a few months.

In September 1820 he left for Italy in the company of Severn, a student-painter. Shelley, then at Pisa, invited him to go there; but since he had a letter of introduction to Dr. Clark in Rome, Keats settled in the latter town under the devoted care of Severn. The poet knew that he was living what he called a "posthumous life," and felt bitterly that he was dying with fame just beyond his grasp.

After some months of agonising illness, he died, aged twenty-five. He was buried in the English cemetery at Rome, and upon his tombstone were inscribed, at his own request, the words *Here lies one whose name was writ in water*.

**Keats's Character and Aims.**—The last year, at least, of Keats's life was so devastated by illness that little of his natural character remained: we have thus merely a short

twenty-four years, of which only some three or four have left any detailed record. Yet, despite the immaturity inevitable in so young a man, Keats's character leaves a singularly vivid and consistent impression.

He was a man peculiarly sensitive to all the pleasures and beauties which the material world can offer : he found an exquisite delight in fine tastes, in graceful or noble forms, in light, in colour, in sound, in physical exertion. His love of a meadow was not, like Wordsworth's, a communion with the spirit of Nature : it was a childlike joy in the coolness, the softness, the greenness of grass, in the hot sun and the blue sky—primarily an animal rather than a spiritual enjoyment. There is a story that he sprinkled his throat with cayenne so as to enjoy the better by contrast the delicious coolness of claret. It may or may not be true ; but it is admirably characteristic of Keats with his impetuosity, his love of sensations, his rather morbid willingness to suffer present discomfort for the sake of heightening future pleasure.

Clearly such a nature might turn easily to the life of the sybarite, but from this Keats was saved by a delight equally intense in the morally and intellectually beautiful. He was as keenly alive to the fineness of a noble deed or of a phrase flashing with genius as to the fineness of the first white flower against the black branches and the cloudy March sky. For him beauty was "a joy for ever," a spirit enduring even after the destruction of the forms in which it expressed itself. Man himself might "sink into nothingness"—Keats had no sure belief in immortality and was morbidly obsessed by the thought of death—but the beauty of the nightingale's song, of an old legend, of a Grecian urn would remain for ever : in a world of transition, unrest, impermanence and illusion, beauty alone was calm, unchanging, permanent, real. In his own words :—

"Beauty is truth, truth beauty"—that is all  
Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know.

Yet, dowered as Keats was with all the sensibility of the poet, he yet had all the sense of the practical businessman. He is totally unlike the wild-eyed, dreamy poet of popular imagination, who seizes a pen in an ecstasy of inspiration and writes without a blot immortal words of complete originality. Inspiration he had in plenty ; but he supplemented it by the most diligent study and the most severe self-criticism. He set himself deliberately to learn and copy the best effects of the best masters in his craft ; he polished and repolished his verses, and some of his most famous phrases were painfully evolved, after repeated alteration, from an originally commonplace line.

The discipline which he brought to bear upon his verse he brought to bear also upon his own character. Since a poet feels more widely and more intensely than the common man, he is necessarily a man of strong and varied emotions, of changing moods and unstable outlook. The peculiar danger of his temperament is that he may let his moods be his masters instead of his servants ; treat all of them as of equal value and become a mere weathercock turned idly by whatever neurotic breeze may blow. Keats was alive to his danger ; instead of letting himself be overwhelmed with anger or despair at the cruel reception of *Endymion*, he summoned up all his fortitude and went on writing, profiting by every grain of truth in the hostile criticism.

Even when his brother was dying and he was himself full of premonitory fears of his own death, he still worked on steadily, not writing wild laments at his hard fate, but laboriously fashioning poems characterised by a restraint and self-mastery remarkable in anyone so young, more remarkable still in anyone so ardent, and most remarkable of all in one living as he did at a time when restraint was considered a fault. Keats's rule of life is summed up in the words of his own Oceanus :—

To bear all naked truths,  
And to envisage circumstance, all calm,  
That is the top of sovereignty.

**Keats's Age.**—This was a strange doctrine in the age of Byron and Shelley, who questioned all established codes of conduct, all conventions and all institutions. Byron's heroes, drawn from himself, or what he imagined himself to be, were lawless, dark, passionate, stained with mysterious crimes, flashing in a moment from gentleness into fury. Shelley's heroes, more noble, preached that man himself was inherently good, that all vices sprang from repression and that a world in which there was no law but love would be perfect. Leigh Hunt, Keats's early guide and the intimate friend of Shelley, was another apostle of freedom : most of Keats's literary circle held in greater or less degree the same views. It says much for Keats's essential sanity that he, while sharing their love of freedom and hatred of tyranny, yet avoided the excesses into which they were led by the ardour of their resistance to the oppression, cant, and convention which characterised their time.

The contrast is equally marked in literary ideals and methods. Keats, like all the great poets of his time, belonged to the Romantic school, the school which, following Coleridge and Wordsworth, had revolted against the artificial and townish Classicism of the school of Pope. Pope had written heroic couplets, neatly divided into halves and stopped at the end : he had loved witty maxims and a man-of-the-world air : his own ideal he expressed in the words—

True wit is nature to advantage dressed,  
What oft was thought, but ne'er so well expressed.

The Romantic school hated all that Pope loved : it loved Nature undressed, and preferred new thoughts to old : it disliked and distrusted Pope's cold reasoning ; it preferred hot feeling.

Keats shared to the full this revolt against artificiality. In one of his early poems, *Sleep and Poetry*, he refers contemptuously to Classicism as "a schism nurtured by foppery and barbarism . . . a school of dolts"; his dislike

of the coldly analytic type of reasoning is evident in his famous cry that science has tarnished the beauty of the rainbow—

We know its woof, its texture : it is given  
In the dull catalogue of common things.

The same distrust of the matter-of-fact of the materialist inspires his *Lamia*, and is the real interpretation of the ejaculation in one of his letters: "O, for a life of sensations rather than of thoughts"—that is, a life of intuition, guided by the highest of our feelings, rather than a life lived by rule and devoted to purely mental activity.

**The Classical Element in Keats.**—But if Keats was a Romantic, he was also a Classicist, not as Pope's school understood the word, but in the sense that he had much of the spirit of the old Greeks—a desire for a perfected rather than an adumbrated beauty, a delight in finished workmanship rather than in vague suggestiveness, a feeling for form. Added to this were a deep interest in the subject-matter of the old Greek writers—the myths of gods and titans, nymphs and fauns—and that innocent pagan delight in the physical side of life already remarked. Perhaps none of our poets has been so Greek as this lad, who never saw Greece and did not read Greek.

It was this Greek strain in Keats, we may suppose, which made him discard the literary excesses of his early models and which showed him the merits even of the despised Classical school. The history of Keats's works, indeed, is the history of a series of experiments : Keats was willing to learn from any poet who had anything to teach.

**Keats's Works and Models.**—The two influences most apparent in his first volume, *Poems* (1817) are those of Spenser and Leigh Hunt. Though the volume shows promise, it cannot be said to achieve much. *Endymion* is on a different level and, though it has serious defects, the poetic ability evident in it is so great that there is no

excuse for the severity of the attacks made upon it by *The Quarterly Review* and *Blackwood's*. It is an allegorical tale of Endymion's love for the goddess of the Moon, a tale certainly very confused and rambling, but full of fine poetic passages. Keats's model was still Spenser, and Spenser had little notion of how to tell a story in a clear and interesting manner.

Moreover, the evil influence of Leigh Hunt is again evident. Keats owed a great debt to Leigh Hunt for his encouragement, for his fine critical acumen, for the talk and the reading to which he introduced him, perhaps for something of the easy narrative which he later developed and which is one of Hunt's chief poetic merits. But there was a streak of vulgarity in Hunt which had led his enemies to dub him and his colleagues and imitators "the Cockney School." He was inclined to smack his lips too vigorously over anything he liked; to write gushing or over-luscious descriptions; to drop from tragedy into tasteless jocosity under the impression that he was thus giving his verse realism and contact with everyday life. Keats's taste was unformed, and there was always a feverish and unbalanced strain in his nature—a strain which, by his own stern self-discipline, he almost eliminated later, but which came out vividly again in his letters to Fanny Brawne, when illness had broken down his self-control. This strain was greatly accentuated by Hunt's influence.

But it was not the defects of *Endymion*, whether due to Spenser's or Hunt's influence or to Keats's own immaturity, which led to the scurrilous attacks of the reviews: it was the fact that he was known to be a friend of Hunt. And though, as we have seen, the reviews did not kill him, they undoubtedly embittered his death. For they had effectually prevented him from gaining in his lifetime that fame which he so earnestly desired: he was confident that had he lived he would have achieved fame in spite of his detractors: he was equally sure that, dying as he did, he would be forgotten. It is difficult to decide upon which side of the account with Leigh Hunt the balance lies.



From *Endymion* Keats turned to the poems contained in this volume : *Lamia*, *Isabella*, *The Eve of St. Agnes*, and other Poems was published in 1820, when Keats was already very seriously ill. Besides *Hyperion* the "other poems" included much of Keats's very finest work—*To Autumn*, *The Ode on a Grecian Urn*, *The Ode to a Nightingale*, *The Ode to Psyche*, and *The Ode on Melancholy*. Except for this volume and an odd poem or so in magazines, nothing more was published till after his death, and little more was written. Most of his other work collected and published posthumously was itself written during the wonderful two years, 1818-19, which saw the composition of this volume.

Of these other poems the most important are a recast of the beginning of *Hyperion*, fine in patches, but on the whole inferior to the first attempt, *La Belle Dame Sans Merci*; *The Eve of St. Mark*; the tragedy of *Otho the Great*, for which Armitage Brown provided the whole invention of the first four acts, Keats inventing the fifth act but merely versifying the others; the trivial frivolity of *The Cap and Bells*; and the best of the sonnets.

The bulk, the variety, and the high general level of excellence of the output of these two years is astonishing. Given but another ten years of healthy life as full of progress and achievement, Keats might have outshone every other poet in the history of English literature. All young poets are imitative; but none has been so successfully imitative and original at the same time as Keats.

He read Chaucer, and learnt from him the easy narrative, the mastery of the octave, and the natural pathos of *Isabella*, and the mediaeval atmosphere of *The Eve of St. Agnes*; he read Milton and learnt the sublimity of reverberant blank verse, the "large utterance of the early gods," the titanic conceptions of *Hyperion*; he read Chatterton and Coleridge and learnt the eerie magic of *La Belle Dame*; most amazing of all, he, the Romantic and friend of Romantics, read Dryden, the great first head of the hated Classical school, and, abandoning the looseness of his

*Endymion* couplets, learnt how to marry in *Lamia* all the ease and clearness and restraint of the Restoration heroic couplet with all the splendour of imaginative feeling of the Romantics.

Of course he made mistakes : not all his borrowings are good. The execrable taste of the opening of Part II. of *Lamia* is due to imitation of Dryden's Restoration levity and cynicism—a levity and cynicism in admirable keeping with Dryden's subjects, but hopelessly incongruous in a poem whose whole success depends upon regarding love seriously. And sometimes his borrowing itself is unsuccessful : his sonnets at their best occasionally have a hint of Shakespeare, but his attempt at a Shakespearean tragedy in *Otho the Great* was bound to fail. So, too, if *The Cap and Bells* is indeed intended to imitate Ariosto, it is a miserably poor copy.

But Keats himself was in general the first to discover his own defects and the first to see how to remedy them. He deliberately chose Milton as a corrective to his lack of restraint ; he as deliberately abandoned *Hyperion* when he discovered that it was becoming “ too Miltonic,” and that his own natural style was in danger of being submerged.

For, despite all his imitation, Keats is always individual. Even in *Hyperion*, where he “ copies ” most closely, there are no two lines which Milton could have written. It is difficult to define Keats's own style—easy to feel it. It is not a mere matter of favourite tricks of phrase, though Keats has many—pet words like *silver*, *pale*, *nest*, *convulsed*, *swoon*, *lush* ; a fondness for compound words, for new adverbial formations such as *refreshfully* and *palely*, a habit of treating the *-ed* of the past tense of verbs as a separate syllable—indeed, most of Keats's favourite words have been industriously traced to Chaucer or Spenser, Chapman or Massinger, Milton or Chatterton, or some other of the many elder poets whose works Keats studied so eagerly.

Perhaps, as in all good styles, the individuality is as much a matter of outlook and feeling as of words. Keats may

borrow Milton's grand style, but he keeps his own eager eye, his own young and entirely unpuritan delight in the senses, his own glowing imagination : Milton could never have written :—

Voiceless, or hoarse with loud *tormented* streams  
or

a few stars  
Were lingering in the heavens, while the thrush  
Began calm-throated.

And in the great *Odes*, where Keats's own philosophy of life finds its supreme expression, his style shakes itself free from reminiscence and echo and becomes no longer Milton suffused with Keats or Keats flushed with Spenser, but pure Keats—the authoritative note of a great and original genius.



# HYPERION.

---

## BOOK I.

DEEP in the shady sadness of a vale  
Far sunken from the healthy breath of morn,  
Far from the fiery noon, and eve's one star,  
Sat gray-hair'd Saturn, quiet as a stone,  
Still as the silence round about his lair ; 5  
Forest on forest hung about his head  
Like cloud on cloud. No stir of air was there,  
Not so much life as on a summer's day  
Robs not one light seed from the feather'd grass,  
But where the dead leaf fell, there did it rest. 10  
A stream went voiceless by, still deadened more  
By reason of his fallen divinity  
Spreading a shade : the Naiad 'mid her reeds  
Press'd her cold finger closer to her lips.

Along the margin-sand large foot-marks went, 15  
No further than to where his feet had stray'd,  
And slept there since. Upon the sodden ground  
His old right hand lay nerveless, listless, dead,  
Unscptred ; and his realmless eyes were closed ;  
While his bow'd head seem'd list'ning to the Earth, 20  
His ancient mother, for some comfort yet.

It seem'd no force could wake him from his place ;  
But there came one, who with a kindred hand

Touch'd his wide shoulders, after bending low  
 With reverence, though to one who knew it not. 25  
 She was a Goddess of the infant world ;  
 By her in stature the tall Amazon  
 Had stood a pigmy's height : she would have ta'en  
 Achilles by the hair and bent his neck ;  
 Or with a finger stay'd Ixion's wheel. 30  
 Her face was large as that of Memphian sphinx,  
 Pedestal'd haply in a palace court,  
 When sages look'd to Egypt for their lore.  
 But oh ! how unlike marble was that face :  
 How beautiful, if sorrow had not made 35  
 Sorrow more beautiful than Beauty's self.  
 There was a listening fear in her regard,  
 As if calamity had but begun ;  
 As if the vanward clouds of evil days  
 Had spent their malice, and the sullen rear 40  
 Was with its stored thunder labouring up.  
 One hand she press'd upon that aching spot  
 Where beats the human heart, as if just there,  
 Though an immortal, she felt cruel pain :  
 The other upon Saturn's bended neck 45  
 She laid, and to the level of his ear  
 Leaning with parted lips, some words she spake  
 In solemn tenour and deep organ tone :  
 Some mourning words, which in our feeble tongue  
 Would come in these like accents ; O how frail 50  
 To that large utterance of the early Gods !  
 " Saturn, look up !—though wherefore, poor old King ?  
 I have no comfort for thee, no not one :  
 I cannot say, ' O wherefore sleepest thou ? '  
 For heaven is parted from thee, and the earth 55  
 Knows thee not, thus afflicted, for a God ;  
 And ocean too, with all its solemn noise,  
 Has from thy sceptre pass'd ; and all the air

Is emptied of thine hoary majesty.  
 Thy thunder, conscious of the new command, 60  
 Rumbles reluctant o'er our fallen house ;  
 And thy sharp lightning in unpractis'd hands  
 Scorches and burns our once serene domain.  
 O aching time ! O moments big as years !  
 All as ye pass swell out the monstrous truth, 65  
 And press it so upon our weary griefs  
 That unbelief has not a space to breathe.  
 Saturn, sleep on :—O thoughtless, why did I  
 Thus violate thy slumbrous solitude ?  
 Why should I ope thy melancholy eyes ? 70  
 Saturn, sleep on ! while at thy feet I weep."

As when, upon a tranced summer-night,  
 Those green-rob'd senators of mighty woods,  
 Tall oaks, branch-charmed by the earnest stars,  
 Dream, and so dream all night without a stir, 75  
 Save from one gradual solitary gust  
 Which comes upon the silence, and dies off,  
 As if the ebbing air had but one wave ;  
 So came these words and went ; the while in tears  
 She touch'd her fair large forehead to the ground, 80  
 Just where her falling hair might be outspread  
 A soft and silken mat for Saturn's feet.  
 One moon, with alteration slow, had shed  
 Her silver seasons four upon the night,  
 And still these two were postured motionless, 85  
 Like natural sculpture in cathedral cavern ;  
 The frozen God still couchant on the earth,  
 And the sad Goddess weeping at his feet :  
 Until at length old Saturn lifted up  
 His faded eyes, and saw his kingdom gone, 90  
 And all the gloom and sorrow of the place,  
 And that fair kneeling Goddess ; and then spake,

As with a palsied tongue, and while his beard  
 Shook horrid with such aspen-malady :  
 “ O tender spouse of gold Hyperion, 95  
 Thea, I feel thee ere I see thy face ;  
 Look up, and let me see our doom in it ;  
 Look up, and tell me if this feeble shape  
 Is Saturn’s ; tell me, if thou hear’st the voice  
 Of Saturn ; tell me, if this wrinkling brow, 100  
 Naked and bare of its great diadem,  
 Peers like the front of Saturn. Who had power  
 To make me desolate ? whence came the strength ?  
 How was it nurtur’d to such bursting forth,  
 While Fate seem’d strangled in my nervous grasp ? 105  
 But it is so ; and I am smother’d up,  
 And buried from all godlike exercise  
 Of influence benign on planets pale,  
 Of admonitions to the winds and seas,  
 Of peaceful sway above man’s harvesting, 110  
 And all those acts which Deity supreme  
 Doth ease its heart of love in.—I am gone  
 Away from my own bosom : I have left  
 My strong identity, my real self,  
 Somewhere between the throne, and where I sit 115  
 Here on this spot of earth. Search, Thea, search !  
 Open thine eyes eterne, and sphere them round  
 Upon all space : space starr’d, and lorn of light ;  
 Space region’d with life-air ; and barren void ;  
 Spaces of fire, and all the yawn of hell.— 120  
 Search, Thea, search ! and tell me, if thou seest  
 A certain shape or shadow, making way  
 With wings of chariot fierce to repossess  
 A heaven he lost erewhile : it must—it must  
 Be of ripe progress—Saturn must be King. 125  
 Yes, there must be a golden victory ;  
 There must be Gods thrown down, and trumpets blown



Of triumph calm, and hymns of festival  
 Upon the gold clouds metropolitan,  
 Voices of soft proclaim, and silver stir 130  
 Of strings in hollow shells ; and there shall be  
 Beautiful things made new, for the surprise  
 Of the sky-children ; I will give command :  
 Thea ! Thea ! Thea ! where is Saturn ? ”

This passion lifted him upon his feet, 135  
 And made his hands to struggle in the air,  
 His Druid locks to shake and ooze with sweat,  
 His eyes to fever out, his voice to cease.  
 He stood, and heard not Thea's sobbing deep ;  
 A little time, and then again he snatch'd 140  
 Utterance thus.—“ But cannot I create ?  
 Cannot I form ? Cannot I fashion forth  
 Another world, another universe,  
 To overbear and crumble this to nought ?  
 Where is another chaos ? Where ? ”—That word 145  
 Found way unto Olympus, and made quake  
 The rebel three.—Thea was startled up,  
 And in her bearing was a sort of hope,  
 As thus she quick-voic'd spake, yet full of awe.

“ This cheers our fallen house : come to our friends,  
 O Saturn ! come away, and give them heart ; 151  
 I know the covert, for thence came I hither.”  
 Thus brief ; then with beseeching eyes she went  
 With backward footing through the shade a space :  
 He follow'd, and she turn'd to lead the way 155  
 Through aged boughs, that yielded like the mist  
 Which eagles cleave upmounting from their nest.

Meanwhile in other realms big tears were shed,  
 More sorrow like to this, and such like woe,  
 Too huge for mortal tongue or pen of scribe : 160

The Titans fierce, self-hid, or prison-bound,  
Groan'd for the old allegiance one more,  
And listen'd in sharp pain for Saturn's voice.  
But one of the whole mammoth-brood still kept  
His sov'reignty, and rule, and majesty ;— 165  
Blazing Hyperion on his orb'd fire  
Still sat, still snuff'd the incense, teeming up  
From man to the sun's God ; yet unsecure :  
For as among us mortals omens drear  
Fright and perplex, so also shuddered he— 170  
Not at dog's howl, or gloom-bird's hated screech,  
Or the familiar visiting of one  
Upon the first toll of his passing-bell,  
Or prophesyings of the midnight lamp ;  
But horrors, portion'd to a giant nerve, 175  
Oft made Hyperion ache. His palace bright  
Bastion'd with pyramids of glowing gold,  
And touch'd with shade of bronzed obelisks,  
Glar'd a blood-red through all its thousand courts,  
Arches, and domes, and fiery galleries ; 180  
And all its curtains of Aurorian clouds  
Flush'd angrily : while sometimes eagle's wings,  
Unseen before by Gods or wondering men,  
Darken'd the place ; and neighing steeds were heard,  
Not heard before by Gods or wondering men. 185  
Also, when he would taste the spicy wreaths  
Of incense, breath'd aloft from sacred hills,  
Instead of sweets, his ample palate took  
Savour of poisonous brass and metal sick :  
And so, when harbour'd in the sleepy west, 190  
After the full completion of fair day,—  
For rest divine upon exalted couch  
And slumber in the arms of melody,  
He pac'd away the pleasant hours of ease  
With stride colossal, on from hall to hall ; 195

While far within each aisle and deep recess,  
His winged minions in close clusters stood,  
Amaz'd and full of fear ; like anxious men  
Who on wide plains gather in panting troops,  
When earthquakes jar their battlements and towers.  
Even now, while Saturn, rous'd from icy trance, 201  
Went step for step with Thea through the woods,  
Hyperion, leaving twilight in the rear,  
Came slope upon the threshold of the west ;  
Then, as was wont, his palace-door flew ope 205  
In smoothest silence, save what solemn tubes,  
Blown by the serious Zephyrs, gave of sweet  
And wandering sounds, slow-breathed melodies ;  
And like a rose in vermeil tint and shape,  
In fragrance soft, and coolness to the eye, 210  
That inlet to severe magnificence  
Stood full blown, for the God to enter in.

He enter'd, but he enter'd full of wrath ;  
His flaming robes stream'd out beyond his heels,  
And gave a roar, as if of earthly fire, 215  
That scar'd away the meek ethereal Hours  
And made their dove-wings tremble. On he flared,  
From stately nave to nave, from vault to vault,  
Through bowers of fragrant and enwreathed light,  
And diamond-paved lustrous long arcades, 220  
Until he reach'd the great main cupola ;  
There standing fierce beneath, he stamped his foot,  
And from the basements deep to the high towers  
Jarr'd his own golden region ; and before  
The quavering thunder thereupon had ceas'd, 225  
His voice leapt out, despite of godlike curb,  
To this result : “ O dreams of day and night !  
O monstrous forms ! O effigies of pain !  
O spectres busy in a cold, cold gloom !

O lank-ear'd Phantoms of black-weeded pools ! 230  
 Why do I know ye ? why have I seen ye ? why  
 Is my eternal essence thus distraught  
 To see and to behold these horrors new ?  
 Saturn is fallen, am I too to fall ?  
 Am I to leave this haven of my rest, 235  
 This cradle of my glory, this soft clime,  
 This calm luxuriance of blissful light,  
 These crystalline pavilions, and pure fanes,  
 Of all my lucent empire ? It is left  
 Deserted, void, nor any haunt of mine. 240  
 The blaze, the splendour, and the symmetry,  
 I cannot see—but darkness, death and darkness.  
 Even here, into my centre of repose,  
 The shady visions come to domineer,  
 Insult, and blind, and stifle up my pomp.— 245  
 Fall !—No, by Tellus and her briny robes !  
 Over the fiery frontier of my realms  
 I will advance a terrible right arm  
 Shall scare that infant thunderer, rebel Jove,  
 And bid old Saturn take his throne again.”— 250  
 He spake, and ceas'd, the while a heavier threat  
 Held struggle with his throat but came not forth ;  
 For as in theatres of crowded men  
 Hubbub increases more they call out “ Hush ! ”  
 So at Hyperion's words the Phantoms pale 255  
 Bestirr'd themselves, thrice horrible and cold ;  
 And from the mirror'd level where he stood  
 A mist arose, as from a scummy marsh.  
 At this, through all his bulk an agony  
 Crept gradual, from the feet unto the crown, 260  
 Like a lithe serpent vast and muscular  
 Making slow way, with head and neck convuls'd  
 From over-strained might. Releas'd, he fled  
 To the eastern gates, and full six dewy hours

Before the dawn in season due should blush, 265  
 He breath'd fierce breath against the sleepy portals,  
 Clear'd them of heavy vapours, burst them wide  
 Suddenly on the ocean's chilly streams.  
 The planet orb of fire, whereon he rode  
 Each day from east to west the heavens through, 270  
 Spun round in sable curtaining of clouds ;  
 Nor therefore veiled quiet, blindfold, and hid,  
 But ever and anon the glancing spheres,  
 Circles, and arcs, and broad-belting colure,  
 Glow'd through, and wrought upon the muffling dark  
 Sweet-shaped lightnings from the nadir deep 276  
 Up to the zenith,—hieroglyphics old  
 Which sages and keen-ey'd astrologers  
 Then living on the earth, with labouring thought  
 Won from the gaze of many centuries : 280  
 Now lost, save what we find on remnants huge  
 Of stone, or marble swart ; their import gone,  
 Their wisdom long since fled.—Two wings this orb  
 Possess'd for glory, two fair argent wings,  
 Ever exalted at the God's approach : 285  
 And now, from forth the gloom their plumes immense  
 Rose, one by one, till all outspreaded were ;  
 While still the dazzling globe maintain'd eclipse,  
 Awaiting for Hyperion's command.  
 Fain would he have commanded, fain took throne 290  
 And bid the day begin, if but for change.  
 He might not :—No, though a primeval God :  
 The sacred seasons might not be disturb'd.  
 Therefore the operations of the dawn  
 Stay'd in their birth, even as here 'tis told. 295  
 Those silver wings expanded sisterly,  
 Eager to sail their orb ; the porches wide  
 Open'd upon the dusk demesnes of night ;  
 And the bright Titan, phrenzied with new woes,

Unus'd to bend, by hard compulsion bent 300  
 His spirit to the sorrow of the time ;  
 And all along a dismal rack of clouds,  
 Upon the boundaries of day and night,  
 He stretch'd himself in grief and radiance faint.  
 There as he lay, the Heaven with its stars 305  
 Look'd down on him with pity, and the voice  
 Of Coelus, from the universal space,  
 Thus whisper'd low and solemn in his ear.  
 " O brightest of my children dear, earth-born  
 And sky-engendered, Son of Mysteries 310  
 All unrevealed even to the powers  
 Which met at thy creating ; at whose joys  
 And palpitations sweet, and pleasures soft,  
 I, Coelus, wonder, how they came and whence ;  
 And at the fruits thereof what shapes they be, 315  
 Distinct, and visible ; symbols divine,  
 Manifestations of that beauteous life  
 Diffus'd unseen throughout eternal space :  
 Of these new-form'd art thou, oh brightest child !  
 Of these, thy brethren and the Goddesses ! 320  
 There is sad feud among ye, and rebellion  
 Of son against his sire. I saw him fall,  
 I saw my first-born tumbled from the throne !  
 To me his arms were spread, to me his voice  
 Found way from forth the thunders round his head !  
 Pale wox I, and in vapours hid my face. 326  
 Art thou, too, near such doom ? vague fear there is :  
 For I have seen my sons most unlike Gods.  
 Divine ye were created, and divine  
 In sad demeanour, solemn, undisturb'd, 330  
 Unruffled, like high Gods, ye liv'd and ruled :  
 Now I behold in you fear, hope, and wrath ;  
 Actions of rage and passion ; even as  
 I see them, on the mortal world beneath,

In men who die.—This is the grief, O Son ! 335  
Sad sign of ruin, sudden dismay, and fall !  
Yet do thou strive ; as thou art capable,  
As thou canst move about, an evident God ;  
And canst oppose to each malignant hour  
Ethereal presence :—I am but a voice ; 340  
My life is but the life of winds and tides,  
No more than winds and tides can I avail :—  
But thou canst.—Be thou therefore in the van  
Of circumstance ; yea, seize the arrow's barb  
Before the tense string murmur.—To the earth ! 345  
For there thou wilt find Saturn, and his woes.  
Meantime I will keep watch on thy bright sun,  
And of thy seasons be a careful nurse.”—  
Ere half this region-whisper had come down,  
Hyperion arose, and on the stars 350  
Lifted his curved lids, and kept them wide  
Until it ceas'd ; and still he kept them wide :  
And still they were the same bright, patient stars.  
Then with a slow incline of his broad breast,  
Like to a diver in the pearly seas, 355  
Forward he stoop'd over the airy shore,  
And plung'd all noiseless into the deep night.

## BOOK II.

JUST at the self-same beat of Time's wide wings  
Hyperion slid into the rustled air,  
And Saturn gain'd with Thea that sad place  
Where Cybele and the bruised Titans mourn'd.  
It was a den where no insulting light 5  
Could glimmer on their tears ; where their own groans  
They felt, but heard not, for the solid roar  
Of thunderous waterfalls and torrents hoarse,  
Pouring a constant bulk, uncertain where.  
Crag jutting forth to crag, and rocks that seem'd 10  
Ever as if just rising from a sleep,  
Forehead to forehead held their monstrous horns ;  
And thus in thousand hugest phantasies  
Made a fit roofing to this nest of woe.  
Instead of thrones, hard flint they sat upon, 15  
Couches of rugged stone, and slaty ridge  
Stubborn'd with iron. All were not assembled :  
Some chain'd in torture, and some wandering.  
Coeus, and Gyges, and Briareüs,  
Typhon, and Dolor, and Porphyryon, 20  
With many more, the brawniest in assault,  
Were pent in regions of laborious breath ;  
Dungeon'd in opaque element, to keep  
Their clenched teeth still clench'd, and all their limbs  
Lock'd up like veins of metal, cramp'd and screw'd ; 25  
Without a motion, save of their big hearts  
Heaving in pain, and horribly convuls'd



With sanguine feverous boiling gurge of pulse.  
 Mnemosyne was straying in the world ;  
 Far from her moon had Phoebe wandered ; 30  
 And many else were free to roam abroad,  
 But for the main, here found they covert drear.  
 Scarce images of life, one here, one there,  
 Lay vast and edgeways ; like a dismal cirque  
 Of Druid stones, upon a forlorn moor, 35  
 When the chill rain begins at shut of eve,  
 In dull November, and their chancel vault,  
 The Heaven itself, is blinded throughout night.  
 Each one kept shroud, nor to his neighbour gave  
 Or word, or look, or action of despair. 40  
 Creüs was one ; his ponderous iron mace  
 Lay by him, and a shatter'd rib of rock  
 Told of his rage, ere he thus sank and pined.  
 Iäpetus another ; in his grasp,  
 A serpent's plashy neck ; its barbed tongue 45  
 Squeeze'd from the gorge, and all its uncurl'd length  
 Dead ; and because the creature could not spit  
 Its poison in the eyes of conquering Jove.  
 Next Cottus : prone he lay, chin uppermost,  
 As though in pain ; for still upon the flint 50  
 He ground severe his skull, with open mouth  
 And eyes at horrid working. Nearest him  
 Asia, born of most enormous Caf,  
 Who cost her mother Tellus keener pangs,  
 Though feminine, than any of her sons : 55  
 More thought than woe was in her dusky face,  
 For she was prophesying of her glory ;  
 And in her wide imagination stood  
 Palm-shaded temples, and high rival fanes,  
 By Oxus or in Ganges' sacred isles. 60  
 Even as hope upon her anchor leans,  
 So leant she, not so fair, upon a tusk

Shed from the broadest of her elephants.  
 Above her, on a crag's uneasy shelfe,  
 Upon his elbow rais'd, all prostrate else, 65  
 Shadow'd Enceladus ; once tame and mild  
 As grazing ox unworried in the meads ;  
 Now tiger-passion'd, lion-thoughted, wroth,  
 He meditated, plotted, and even now  
 Was hurling mountains in that second war, 70  
 Not long delay'd, that scar'd the younger Gods  
 To hide themselves in forms of beast and bird.  
 Not far hence Atlas ; and beside him prone  
 Phorcus, the sire of Gorgons. Neighbour'd close  
 Oceanus, and Tethys, in whose lap 75  
 Sobb'd Clymene among her tangled hair.  
 In midst of all lay Themis, at the feet  
 Of Ops the queen all clouded round from sight ;  
 No shape distinguishable, more than when  
 Thick night confounds the pine-tops with the clouds :  
 And many else whose names may not be told. 81  
 For when the Muse's wings are air-ward spread,  
 Who shall delay her flight ? And she must chaunt  
 Of Saturn, and his guide, who now had climb'd  
 With damp and slippery footing from a depth 85  
 More horrid still. Above a sombre cliff  
 Their heads appear'd, and up their stature grew  
 Till on the level height their steps found ease :  
 Then Thea spread abroad her trembling arms  
 Upon the precincts of this nest of pain, 90  
 And sidelong fix'd her eye on Saturn's face :  
 There saw she direst strife ; the supreme God  
 At war with all the frailty of grief,  
 Of rage, of fear, anxiety, revenge,  
 Remorse, spleen, hope, but most of all despair. 95  
 Against these plagues he strove in vain ; for Fate  
 Had pour'd a mortal oil upon his head,

A disanointing poison : so that Thea,  
 Affrightened, kept her still, and let him pass  
 First onwards in, among the fallen tribe. 100

As with us mortal men, the laden heart  
 Is persecuted more, and fever'd more,  
 When it is nighing to the mournful house  
 Where other hearts are sick of the same bruise ;  
 So Saturn, as he walk'd into the midst, 105  
 Felt faint, and would have sunk among the rest,  
 But that he met Enceladus's eye,  
 Whose mightiness, and awe of him, at once  
 Came like an inspiration ; and he shouted,  
 " Titans, behold your God ! " at which some groan'd ;  
 Some started on their feet ; some also shouted ; 111  
 Some wept, some wail'd, all bow'd with reverence ;  
 And Ops, uplifting her black folded veil,  
 Show'd her pale cheeks, and all her forehead wan,  
 Her eye-brows thin and jet, and hollow eyes. 115  
 There is a roaring in the bleak-grown pines  
 When winter lifts his voice ; there is a noise  
 Among immortals when a God gives sign,  
 With hushing finger, how he means to load  
 His tongue with the full weight of utterless thought, 120  
 With thunder, and with music, and with pomp :  
 Such noise is like the roar of bleak-grown pines :  
 Which, when it ceases in this mountain'd world,  
 No other sound succeeds ; but ceasing here,  
 Among these fallen, Saturn's voice therefrom 125  
 Grew up like organ, that begins anew  
 Its strain, when other harmonies, stopt short,  
 Leave the dinn'd air vibrating silverly.  
 Thus grew it up—" Not in my own sad breast,  
 Which is its own great judge and searcher out, 130  
 Can I find reason why ye should be thus :

Not in the legends of the first of days,  
 Studied from that old spirit-leaved book  
 Which starry Uranus with finger bright  
 Sav'd from the shores of darkness, when the waves 135  
 Low-ebb'd still hid it up in shallow gloom ;—  
 And the which book ye know I ever kept  
 For my first-based footstool :—Ah, infirm !  
 Not there, nor in sign, symbol, or portent  
 Of element, earth, water, air, and fire,— 140  
 At war, at peace, or inter-quarreling  
 One against one, or two, or three, or all  
 Each several one against the other three,  
 As fire with air loud warring when rain-floods  
 Drown both, and press them both against earth's face,  
 Where, finding sulphur, a quadruple wrath 146  
 Unhinges the poor world ;—not in that strife,  
 Wherefrom I take strange lore, and read it deep,  
 Can I find reason why ye should be thus :  
 No, no-where can unriddle, though I search, 150  
 And pore on Nature's universal scroll  
 Even to swooning, why ye, Divinities,  
 The first-born of all shap'd and palpable Gods,  
 Should cower beneath what, in comparison,  
 Is untremendous might. Yet ye are here, 155  
 O'erwhelm'd, and spurn'd, and batter'd, ye are here !  
 O Titans, shall I say, ' Arise ! '—Ye groan :  
 Shall I say ' Crouch ! '—Ye groan. What can I then ?  
 O Heaven wide ! O unseen parent dear !  
 What can I ? Tell me, all ye brethren Gods, 160  
 How can we war, how engine our great wrath !  
 O speak your counsel now, for Saturn's ear  
 Is all a-hunger'd. Thou, Oceanus,  
 Ponderest high and deep ; and in thy face  
 I see, astonied, that severe content 165  
 Which comes of thought and musing : give us help ! ”

So ended Saturn ; and the God of the Sea,  
 Sophist and sage, from no Athenian grove,  
 But cogitation in his watery shades,  
 Arose, with locks not oozy, and began, 170  
 In murmurs, which his first-endeavouring tongue  
 Caught infant-like from the far-foamed sands.  
 " O ye, whom wrath consumes ! who, passion-stung,  
 Writhe at defeat, and nurse your agonies !  
 Shut up your senses, stifle up your ears, 175  
 My voice is not a bellows unto ire.  
 Yet listen, ye who will, whilst I bring proof  
 How ye, perforce, must be content to stoop :  
 And in the proof much comfort will I give,  
 If ye will take that comfort in its truth. 180  
 We fall by course of Nature's law, not force  
 Of thunder, or of Jove. Great Saturn, thou  
 Hast sifted well the atom-universe ;  
 But for this reason, that thou art the King,  
 And only blind from sheer supremacy, 185  
 One avenue was shaded from thine eyes,  
 Through which I wandered to eternal truth.  
 And first, as thou wast not the first of powers,  
 So art thou not the last ; it cannot be :  
 Thou art not the beginning nor the end. 190  
 From chaos and parental darkness came  
 Light, the first fruits of that intestine broil,  
 That sullen ferment, which for wondrous ends  
 Was ripening in itself. The ripe hour came,  
 And with it light, and light, engendering 195  
 Upon its own producer, forthwith touch'd  
 The whole enormous matter into life.  
 Upon that very hour, our parentage,  
 The Heavens and the Earth, were manifest :  
 Then thou first born, and we the giant race, 200  
 Found ourselves ruling new and beauteous realms.

Now comes the pain of truth, to whom 'tis pain ;  
 O folly ! for to bear all naked truths,  
 And to envisage circumstance, all calm,  
 That is the top of sovereignty. Mark well ! 205  
 As Heaven and Earth are fairer, fairer far  
 Than Chaos and blank Darkness, though once chiefs ;  
 And as we show beyond that Heaven and Earth  
 In form and shape compact and beautiful,  
 In will, in action free, companionship, 210  
 And thousand other signs of purer life ;  
 So on our heels a fresh perfection treads,  
 A power more strong in beauty, born of us  
 And fated to excel us, as we pass  
 In glory that old Darkness : nor are we 215  
 Thereby more conquer'd, than by us the rule  
 Of shapeless Chaos. Say, doth the dull soil  
 Quarrel with the proud forests it hath fed,  
 And feedeth still, more comely than itself ?  
 Can it deny the chieftdom of green groves ? 220  
 Or shall the tree be envious of the dove  
 Because it cooeth, and hath snowy wings  
 To wander wherewithal and find its joys ?  
 We are such forest-trees, and our fair boughs  
 Have bred forth, not pale solitary doves, 225  
 But eagles golden-feather'd, who do tower  
 Above us in their beauty, and must reign  
 In right thereof ; for 'tis the eternal law  
 That first in beauty should be first in might :  
 Yea, by that law, another race may drive 230  
 Our conquerors to mourn as we do now.  
 Have ye beheld the young God of the Seas,  
 My dispossessor ? Have ye seen his face ?  
 Have ye beheld his chariot, foam'd along  
 By noble winged creatures he hath made ? 235  
 I saw him on the calmed waters scud,

With such a glow of beauty in his eyes,  
 That it enforc'd me to bid sad farewell  
 To all my empire : farewell sad I took,  
 And hither came, to see how dolorous fate 240  
 Had wrought upon ye ; and how I might best  
 Give consolation in this woe extreme.  
 Receive the truth, and let it be your balm."

Whether through poz'd conviction, or disdain,  
 They guarded silence, when Oceanus 245  
 Left murmuring, what deepest thought can tell ?  
 But so it was, none answer'd for a space,  
 Save one whom none regarded, Clymene ;  
 And yet she answer'd not, only complain'd,  
 With hectic lips, and eyes up-looking mild, 250  
 Thus wording timidly among the fierce :  
 " O Father, I am here the simplest voice,  
 And all my knowledge is that joy is gone,  
 And this thing woe crept in among our hearts,  
 There to remain for ever, as I fear : 255  
 I would not bode of evil, if I thought  
 So weak a creature could turn off the help  
 Which by just right should come of mighty Gods ;  
 Yet let me tell my sorrow, let me tell  
 Of what I heard, and how it made me weep, 260  
 And know that we had parted from all hope.  
 I stood upon a shore, a pleasant shore,  
 Where a sweet clime was breathed from a land  
 Of fragrance, quietness, and trees, and flowers.  
 Full of calm joy it was, as I of grief ; 265  
 Too full of joy and soft delicious warmth ;  
 So that I felt a movement in my heart  
 To chide, and to reproach that solitude  
 With songs of misery, music of our woes ;  
 And sat me down, and took a mouthed shell 270

And murmur'd into it, and made melody  
O melody no more ! for while I sang,  
And with poor skill let pass into the breeze  
The dull shell's echo, from a bowery strand  
Just opposite, an island of the sea, 275  
There came enchantment with the shifting wind,  
That did both drown and keep alive my ears.  
I threw my shell away upon the sand,  
And a wave fill'd it, as my sense was fill'd  
With that new blissful golden melody. 280  
A living death was in each gush of sounds,  
Each family of rapturous hurried notes,  
That fell, one after one, yet all at once,  
Like pearl beads dropping sudden from their string :  
And then another, then another strain, 285  
Each like a dove leaving its olive perch,  
With music wing'd instead of silent plumes,  
To hover round my head, and make me sick  
Of joy and grief at once. Grief overcame,  
And I was stopping up my frantic ears, 290  
When, past all hindrance of my trembling hands,  
A voice came sweeter, sweeter than all tune,  
And still it cry'd, ' Apollo ! young Apollo !  
' The morning-bright Apollo ! young Apollo ! '  
I fled, it follow'd me, and cry'd ' Apollo ! ' 295  
O Father, and O Brethren, had ye felt  
Those pains of mine ; O Saturn, hadst thou felt,  
Ye would not call this too indulged tongue  
Presumptuous, in thus venturing to be heard."

So far her voice flow'd on, like timorous brook 300  
That, lingering along a pebbled coast,  
Doth fear to meet the sea : but sea it met,  
And shudder'd ; for the overwhelming voice  
Of huge Enceladus swallow'd it in wrath :



The ponderous syllables, like sullen waves 305  
 In the half-glutted hollows of reef-rocks,  
 Came booming thus, while still upon his arm  
 He lean'd ; not rising, from supreme contempt.  
 " Or shall we listen to the over-wise,  
 Or to the over-foolish giant, Gods ? 310  
 Not thunderbolt on thunderbolt, till all  
 That rebel Jove's whole armoury were spent,  
 Not world on world upon these shoulders piled,  
 Could agonize me more than baby-words  
 In midst of this dethronement horrible. 315  
 Speak ! roar ! shout ! yell ! ye sleepy Titans all.  
 Do ye forget the blows, the buffets vile ?  
 Are ye not smitten by a youngling arm ?  
 Dost thou forget, sham Monarch of the Waves,  
 Thy scalding in the seas ? What, have I rous'd 320  
 Your spleens with so few simple words as these ?  
 O joy ! for now I see ye are not lost :  
 O joy ! for now I see a thousand eyes  
 Wide glaring for revenge ! "—As this he said,  
 He lifted up his stature vast, and stood, 325  
 Still without intermission speaking thus :  
 " Now ye are flames, I'll tell you how to burn,  
 And purge the ether of our enemies ;  
 How to feed fierce the crooked stings of fire,  
 And singe away the swollen clouds of Jove, 330  
 Stifling that puny essence in its tent.  
 O let him feel the evil he hath done ;  
 For though I scorn Oceanus's lore,  
 Much pain have I for more than loss of realms :  
 The days of peace and slumberous calm are fled ; 335  
 Those days, all innocent of scathing war,  
 When all the fair Existences of heaven  
 Came open-eyed to guess what we would speak :—  
 That was before our brows were taught to frown,

Before our lips knew else but solemn sounds ; 340  
 That was before we knew the winged thing,  
 Victory, might be lost, or might be won.  
 And be ye mindful that Hyperion,  
 Our brightest brother, still is undisgraced—  
 Hyperion, lo ! his radiance is here ! ” 345

All eyes were on Enceladus's face,  
 And they beheld, while still Hyperion's name  
 Flew from his lips up to the vaulted rocks,  
 A pallid gleam across his features stern :  
 Not savage, for he saw full many a God 350  
 Wroth as himself. He look'd upon them all,  
 And in each face he saw a gleam of light,  
 But splendor in Saturn's, whose hoar locks  
 Shone like the bubbling foam about a keel  
 When the prow sweeps into a midnight cove. 355  
 In pale and silver silence they remain'd,  
 Till suddenly a splendour, like the morn,  
 Pervaded all the beetling gloomy steeps,  
 All the sad spaces of oblivion,  
 And every gulf, and every chasm old, 360  
 And every height, and every sullen depth,  
 Voiceless, or hoarse with loud tormented streams :  
 And all the everlasting cataracts,  
 And all the headlong torrents far and near,  
 Mantled before in darkness and huge shade, 365  
 Now saw the light and made it terrible.  
 It was Hyperion :—a granite peak  
 His bright feet touch'd, and there he stay'd to view  
 The misery his brilliance had betray'd  
 To the most hateful seeing of itself. 370  
 Golden his hair of short Numidian curl,  
 Regal his shape majestic, a vast shade  
 In midst of his own brightness, like the bulk

Of Memnon's image at the set of sun  
To one who travels from the dusking East : 375  
Sighs, too, as mournful as that Memnon's harp  
He utter'd, while his hands contemplative  
He press'd together, and in silence stood.  
Despondence seiz'd again the fallen Gods  
At sight of the dejected King of Day, 380  
And many hid their faces from the light :  
But fierce Enceladus sent forth his eyes  
Among the brotherhood ; and, at their glare,  
Uprose Iäpetus, and Creüs too,  
And Phorcus, sea-born, and together strode 385  
To where he towered on his eminence.  
There those four shouted forth old Saturn's name ;  
Hyperion from the peak loud answered, " Saturn ! "  
Saturn sat near the Mother of the Gods,  
In whose face was no joy, though all the Gods 390  
Gave from their hollow throats the name of " Saturn ! "

### BOOK III.

THUS in alternate uproar and sad peace,  
Amazed were those Titans utterly.  
O leave them, Muse ! O leave them to their woes ;  
For thou art weak to sing such tumults dire :  
A solitary sorrow best befits 5  
Thy lips, and antheming a lonely grief.  
Leave them, O Muse ! for thou anon wilt find  
Many a fallen old Divinity  
Wandering in vain about bewildered shores.  
Meantime touch piously the Delphic harp, 10  
And not a wind of heaven but will breathe  
In aid soft warble from the Dorian flute ;  
For lo ! 'tis for the Father of all verse.  
Flush every thing that hath a vermeil hue,  
Let the rose glow intense and warm the air, 15  
And let the clouds of even and of morn  
Float in voluptuous fleeces o'er the hills ;  
Let the red wine within the goblet boil,  
Cold as a bubbling well ; let faint-lipp'd shells,  
On sands, or in great deeps, vermilion turn 20  
Through all their labyrinths ; and let the maid  
Blush keenly, as with some warm kiss surpris'd.  
Chief isle of the embowered Cyclades,  
Rejoice, O Delos, with thine olives green,  
And poplars, and lawn-shading palms, and beech, 25  
In which the Zephyr breathes the loudest song,

And hazels thick, dark-stemm'd beneath the shade :  
 Apollo is once more the golden theme !  
 Where was he, when the Giant of the Sun  
 Stood bright, amid the sorrow of his peers ? 30  
 Together had he left his mother fair  
 And his twin-sister sleeping in their bower,  
 And in the morning twilight wandered forth  
 Beside the osiers of a rivulet,  
 Full ankle-deep in lillies of the vale. 35  
 The nightingale had ceas'd, and a few stars  
 Were lingering in the heavens, while the thrush  
 Began calm-throated. Throughout all the isle  
 There was no covert, no retired cave  
 Unhaunted by the murmurous noise of waves, 40  
 Though scarcely heard in many a green recess.  
 He listen'd, and he wept, and his bright tears  
 Went trickling down the golden bow he held.  
 Thus with half-shut suffused eyes he stood,  
 While from beneath some cumbrous boughs hard by 45  
 With solemn step an awful Goddess came,  
 And there was purport in her looks for him,  
 Which he with eager guess began to read  
 Perplex'd, the while melodiously he said :  
 " How cam'st thou over the unfooted sea ? 50  
 Or hath that antique mien and robed form  
 Mov'd in these vales invisible till now ?  
 Sure I have heard those vestments sweeping o'er  
 The fallen leaves, when I have sat alone  
 In cool mid-forest. Surely I have traced 55  
 The rustle of those ample skirts about  
 These grassy solitudes, and seen the flowers  
 Lift up their heads, as still the whisper pass'd.  
 Goddess ! I have beheld those eyes before,  
 And their eternal calm, and all that face, 60  
 Or have I dream'd."—"Yes," said the supreme shape,

Thou hast dream'd of me ; and awaking up  
 Didst find a lyre all golden by thy side,  
 Whose strings touch'd by thy fingers, all the vast  
 Unwearied ear of the whole universe 65  
 Listen'd in pain and pleasure at the birth  
 Of such new tuneful wonder. Is't not strange  
 That thou shouldst weep, so gifted ? Tell me, youth,  
 What sorrow thou canst feel ; for I am sad  
 When thou dost shed a tear : explain thy griefs 70  
 To one who in this lonely isle hath been  
 The watcher of thy sleep and hours of life,  
 From the young day when first thy infant hand  
 Pluck'd witless the weak flowers, till thine arm  
 Could bend that bow heroic to all times. 75  
 Show thy heart's secret to an ancient Power  
 Who hath forsaken old and sacred thrones  
 For prophecies of thee, and for the sake  
 Of loveliness new born."—Apollo then,  
 With sudden scrutiny and gloomless eyes, 80  
 Thus answer'd, while his white melodious throat  
 Throbb'd with the syllables.—“ Mnemosyne !  
 Thy name is on my tongue, I know not how ;  
 Why should I tell thee what thou so well seest ?  
 Why should I strive to show what from thy lips 85  
 Would come no mystery ? For me, dark, dark,  
 And painful vile oblivion seals my eyes :  
 I strive to search wherefore I am so sad,  
 Until a melancholy numbs my limbs ;  
 And then upon the grass I sit, and moan, 90  
 Like one who once had wings.—O why should I  
 Feel curs'd and thwarted, when the liegeless air  
 Yields to my step aspirant ? why should I  
 Spurn the green turf as hateful to my feet ?  
 Goddess benign, point forth some unknown thing : 95  
 Are there not other regions than this isle ?

What are the stars ? There is the sun, the sun !  
 And the most patient brilliance of the moon !  
 And stars by thousands ! Point me out the way  
 To any one particular beauteous star, 100  
 And I will flit into it with my lyre,  
 And make its silvery splendour pant with bliss.  
 I have heard the cloudy thunder : Where is power ?  
 Whose hand, whose essence, what divinity  
 Makes this alarum in the elements, 105  
 While I here idle listen on the shores  
 In fearless yet in aching ignorance ?  
 O tell me, lonely Goddess, by thy harp,  
 That waileth every morn and eventide,  
 Tell me why thus I rave, about these groves ! 110  
 Mute thou remainest—Mute ! yet I can read  
 A wondrous lesson in thy silent face :  
 Knowledge enormous makes a God of me.  
 Names, deeds, grey legends, dire events, rebellions,  
 Majesties, sovran voices, agonies, 115  
 Creations and destroyings, all at once  
 Pour into the wide hollows of my brain,  
 And deify me, as if some blithe wine  
 Or bright elixir peerless I had drunk,  
 And so become immortal.”—Thus the God, 120  
 While his enkindled eyes, with level glance  
 Beneath his white soft temples, stedfast kept  
 Trembling with light upon Mnemosyne.  
 Soon wild commotions shook him, and made flush  
 All the immortal fairness of his limbs ; 125  
 Most like the struggle at the gate of death ;  
 Or liker still to one who should take leave  
 Of pale immortal death, and with a pang  
 As hot as death’s is chill, with fierce convulse  
 Die into life : so young Apollo anguish’d : 130  
 His very hair, his golden tresses famed

Kept undulation round his eager neck.  
 During the pain Mnemosyne upheld  
 Her arms as one who prophesied.—At length  
 Apollo shriek'd ;—and lo ! from all his limbs

135

Celestial \* \* \* \* \*

\* \* \* \* \*



## NOTES.

---

### HYPERION.

*Hyperion* was originally meant to be an epic in twelve books, but there is evidence that Keats abandoned this intention some time before he abandoned the poem, and that the poem, had he finished it, would not have exceeded four books. In this case Keats would not have attempted to narrate in detail the war of Enceladus and the giants against the Olympians, and the rest of the poem would have merely told us how Apollo went forth to fight Hyperion and how Hyperion, overcome by the beauty of his successor, found resistance impossible.

The poem opens with the despair of Saturn, chief of the second dynasty of gods, who with his fellow-gods has just been dethroned by his sons and daughters, the Olympians, as he and his dynasty in his youth, had himself dethroned his father Uranus and his fellows. He is roused by Thea, wife of Hyperion, the sun-god, who alone among his dynasty has not yet fallen. She leads him away to their friends. Meanwhile Hyperion descends to his palace, is shaken by evil omens, comforted by his father Coelus, who bears no resentment for his own earlier dethronement, and descends to earth. In Book II. Hyperion comes to the spot where the remnant of the conquered host, including Saturn and Thea, are gathered. Saturn calls for counsel. The sea-god advises acquiescence in their fate, since "'tis the eternal law that first in beauty should be first in might." Clymene tells how she heard the beauteous music of Apollo and Enceladus urges them to revenge. Hyperion then arrives.

Book III. tells how meanwhile Apollo, destined successor to Hyperion, is wandering in an isle when Mnemosyne visits him and dowers him with full divinity. Here the fragment ends.

The poem can thus be seen to have an allegorical significance—the greater beauty must always succeed the less, but, as we see both from the sufferings of the old gods and from the convulsive shrieks of Apollo the poet-god himself, only at the cost of pain ;

the poet must feel the agony of the world before he gains full maturity.

Keats abandoned the poem because he felt that it was too Miltonic, that he was in danger of writing what was to him an alien tongue—an artificial dialect full of Latinisms and tricks of style. Certainly the wonderful way in which he has caught the very accent of Milton—mingled as it is with his own more human “romantic” notes—justifies his fears; there was clearly a danger that he might leave the path natural to his genius. Moreover the fragment as we have it already parallels in many respects the early books of *Paradise Lost*, and, had the poem proceeded, it could hardly have failed to echo other situations treated by Milton, since the two themes have so much in common. Sublime as the fragment is, Keats’s decision was therefore probably wise.

A few of the Miltonic echoes of the poem are pointed out in the notes, but in idea, in rhythm, in vocabulary, in the use of repetition, of inversion, of Latinisms, the debt is enormous: its extent can be realised only by reading Milton’s great epic.

What Keats added was a power of pictorial representation, a human warmth, a sensuous love of the beauties of Nature not characteristic of Milton—note especially the splendour of Hyperion’s palace and his entry to it, and the sublime description of the dejected Saturn which recalls some vast statue of the early world.

## BOOK I.

1. **shady sadness**: “gloomy shade”; this use of abstractions is frequent in Keats: here it serves to give the gloom instead of the shade first importance.

3. **eve’s one star**: Venus, the evening star, which appears long before the others: the slow movement of the three heavy stresses suggests the peace of evening.

4. **Saturn**: the chief of the ancient dynasty of gods, father of Jupiter, Neptune, etc., and identified by the Romans with the Greek Cronos. He was the youngest of the Titans, son of Uranus and Ge (Heaven and Earth) and dethroned his father Uranus. The striking simile is reminiscent of Chaucer’s “domb as any stoon” (*House of Fame*, II. 656).

6. **hung about his head**: *i.e.* “rose above him, on the sides of the valley.”

10. **But where . . . rest**: one of Keats’s perfect little pictures, showing the close observation of the Nature-lover.

11-14. **still . . . lips**: the Naiad, or nymph of the stream, has hushed the ripples to silence, awed by the shade of the fallen god.

18. **nerveless**: “without strength”; the succession of epithets and the pause after *unscathed* give an effect of heavy despair.

19. **realmless** : "no longer possessing a kingdom"; the adjective is transferred from Saturn to his eyes.

20-1. **Earth . . . mother** : see note on line 4.

27-8. **By her . . . height** : "compared with her one of the Amazons, the mythical warrior-women of Asia Minor, would have seemed no taller than a pigmy." **Had** : subjunctive, *would have*.

29. **Achilles** : the mighty hero of Homer's *Iliad*; he led the Greeks against Troy.

30. **Ixion** : for ungrateful treachery to Zeus, Ixion king of the Lapithae was chained by the hands and feet to a perpetually revolving wheel.

31. **Memphian sphinx** : a sphinx or stone monster, part lion, part woman, at Memphis, formerly the second greatest city of Egypt, about 10 miles above the Pyramids.

33. **when . . . lore** : "when Egypt was the centre of learning"; cp. Acts vii. 22.

35-6. **How . . . self** : *i.e.* "her face would have been called beautiful, if the expression of sorrow upon it had not been more beautiful than its form"; such fantastic ideas are called conceits.

37. **there was . . . in her regard** : a splendid example of Keats's concise and vivid phrasing "she looked as if she were listening and afraid."

39-41. **As if the vanward . . . up** : "as if the storm of misfortune had just begun, the first clouds having burst only to be followed by the thunder of the full tempest." Within the metaphor of the storm there is a second metaphor of battle; it is such compressed imagery which gives Keats's style its richness and dignity.

48. **In solemn tenour** : "of solemn purport."

50-1. **O how . . . Gods!** : "how feeble (is our language) compared to the mighty speech of the early gods."

61. **reluctant** : besides the modern meaning, there is here a hint of the original (and Miltonic) significance, "struggling violently."

65-7. **All . . . breathe** : "as each moment passes, it makes the wretched truth more evident and forces it upon our grief-stricken minds so that it is impossible for us to disbelieve it."

74. **branch-charmed** : "with their branches charmed into stillness." **earnest** : another of Keats's exquisite epithets.

83-4. **One . . . night** : "one moon had slowly changed from new through her four quarters to full," *i.e.* a month had passed.

86. **natural . . . cavern** : Keats is probably thinking of Fingal's Cave in the Isle of Staffa, which he elsewhere called a "cathedral of the sea."

87. **frozen** : *i.e.* motionless through grief. **couchant** : lying.

90-4. Such a succession of simple sentences joined by *and* is

characteristic of epic style—the construction gives simplicity, continuity, and dignity.

94. *horrid* : “standing on end”—the original meaning of the word (Latin *horreo*), which later came to mean “causing the hair to stand on end with fright.” *aspen-malady* : one of Keats’s pregnant compound words, meaning “sickness which made him tremble like an aspen tree.”

96. *Thea* : Thia, sister of Saturn and wife of Hyperion, to whom she bore Helios (the sun), Eos (Aurora), and Selene (the moon). Hyperion was thus really the father of the sun, not the sun himself.

105. *nervous* : “strong, vigorous.”

108. *influence benign . . . pale* : “kindly rule of the (movements of the) white planets” : the placing of the adjectives after the noun is a Miltonic device.

112-16. *I am gone . . . earth* : “I am no longer myself, since I have lost my power ; when I fell from my throne in Heaven all that made me what I was left me.”

117. *eterne* : “eternal.” *sphere* : “roll.”

118. *lorn of light* : “unlighted” ; *lorn* was originally the past participle of *lose* ; hence *bereft*.

119. *region’d with life-air* : “made a region filled with air, which alone makes life possible.” *barren void* : “space empty of air and so unable to produce life.”

120. *yawn* : “gulf.”

125. *be of ripe progress* : “go on satisfactorily.”

129. *metropolitan* : “of the chief city” (of the gods).

130. *voices of soft proclaim* : “voices which make proclamation in gentle accents.” *silver . . . shells* : “the silvery notes of instruments made by stretching across hollow shells.”

136. *Druid* : the Druids or ancient British priests are generally represented as old men with long, white hair.

138. *fever out* : “start out from his head, bright with fever.”

140. *snatch’d utterance* : “spoke,” but the phrase admirably suggests sudden desperate speech.

145. *chaos* : “the primeval confusion from which the universe was formed.” Saturn asks where he can find raw material for another universe.

146. *Olympus* : the mountain of Thessaly in Greece upon which the gods were supposed to live.

147. *rebel three* : *i.e.* Jupiter, Neptune, and Pluto, who had usurped rule over heaven, the sea, and Hades respectively.

156-7. *like . . . nest* : as often with Keats, the simile has also a secondary appropriateness—if the boughs yield like mist, Saturn and Thea are “upmounting” like eagles, the royal birds.

161. **Titans** : *i.e.* the other Titans. The Titans were the six sons and daughters of Uranus and Ge, who, after their parents were dethroned, formed a dynasty of gods, Saturn being chief among them. They were in turn dethroned by the sons of Saturn, headed by Zeus (Jupiter). **self-hid** : "having hidden themselves." **prison-bound** : "fettered and imprisoned."

162. **groan'd . . . allegiance** : "groaned with longing for the rule of their old leader Saturn."

164. **mammoth-brood** : "mighty race" of Titans.

166. **on his orb'd fire** : "on the blazing globe of the sun."

171. **dog's . . . screech** : the howling of dogs and the screeching of owls were supposed to foretell disaster.

172-3. **familiar . . . bell** : "the appearance of the ghost of a friend at the first note of a bell tolled for his death."

174. **prophesying . . . lamp** : omens were read into the way in which a wick burnt down, etc.

175. **portion'd** : "proportioned," *i.e.* the horrors were as much greater than ordinary horrors as Hyperion's nerves were stronger than human nerves.

177. **bastion'd** : *i.e.* protected by bastions or fortifications projecting from the angles of a rampart.

181. **Aurorian** : belonging to Aurora, the goddess of the dawn.

182. **angeryly** : a more striking word than *angrily* : Keats probably took it from Shakespeare's *King John*, IV. i. 82.

183-5. These almost identical lines give the haunting beauty peculiar to refrains, besides emphasising the strangeness of the omens.

188. **metal sick** : a reference to the unpleasant taste of metals.

192. **For** : "instead of."

197. **minions** : "followers, retainers."

204. **slope** : "moving on a slope"; this use of the word is Miltonic.

206. **solemn tubes** : *i.e.* trumpets.

207. **Zephyrs** : "breezes" : Zephyrus was the west wind.

209. **vermeil** : vermilion, rosy.

211. **inlet** : "entrance," another Miltonic word.

216. **Hours** : the daughters of Zeus (Jupiter) : their dove-wings seem to be Keats's invention, since they are generally represented as wingless.

226. **despite of godlike curb** : "in spite of his divine attempt to repress his feelings."

227. **dreams** : *i.e.* the portentous shapes, "horrors portion'd to a giant nerve," which had appeared to foretell his ruin, the lank-ear'd Phantoms of line 230.

246. *Tellus* and her briny robes : *i.e.* the earth and the sea which surrounds it.

249. *infant thunderer*, rebel *Jove* : *Jove* (*Jupiter*) or *Zeus* had driven his father from the throne by hurling thunderbolts.

253-5. *For . . . Hush !* : perhaps the only passage in the poem which, under the influence of the "Cockney school," falls below epic dignity.

262. *convuls'd* : *i.e.* rolled back convulsively : there is here something of the force of the Latin *convulsum* ; the word is one of Keats's favourites.

274. *broad-belting colure* : the *colures* are the two circles of the celestial sphere, supposed to intersect each other in points corresponding to the terrestrial poles. Keats probably took the word from Milton.

276. *nadir* : the part of the heavens directly under our feet, the lowest point, opposite the *zenith* or highest point.

287. *outspread* : probably Keats thought this a more graphic and dignified form than *outspread*.

288. *dazzling . . . eclipse* : *i.e.* the globe remained dark until *Hyperion* commanded light to appear, that is, until the sun rose.

296. *sisterly* : "like two sisters."

297. *sail* : "make to sail."

298. *dusk demesnes* : "dark dominions."

307. *Coelus* : the Latin equivalent of *Uranus* (see lines 309-10, and note on line 4) ; Keats, in opposition to the legendary account, makes him pity his dethroned offspring instead of rejoicing revengefully that they have met the doom which he suffered at their hands.

311-12. *All unrevealed . . . creating* : unknown even to thy parents.

315. *at . . . thereof* : *i.e.* at his children, the children of earth and sky.

319-20. *Of these . . . goddesses* : *i.e.* "thou, thy brethren and the goddesses are among these new-form'd manifestations."

326. *wox* : "grew."

338. *an evident god* : "obviously divine, not dethroned and powerless as I am."

340. *ethereal* : "heavenly."

343-5. *Be . . . circumstance* : "do thou therefore lead events instead of awaiting them." *seize . . . murmur* : "seize the point of the arrow aimed at thee before the taut bowstring hums as the arrow is shot," *i.e.* anticipate attack.

349. *region-whisper* : "whisper from the heavenly regions."

354. *incline* : "inclination, bending."

## BOOK II.

1-4. **Just . . . mourn'd** : these lines link the close of Book I. to the events immediately following those narrated in Book I., lines 155-7.

4. **Cybele** : or Rhea, a daughter of Uranus and the wife of Saturn.

5. **insulting** : the word keeps something of the original force of *leaping in* and something of the derived sense of jumping upon a fallen foe.

7. **for** : "in consequence of."

9. **Pouring . . . where** : "constantly pouring down the same volume of water, without any knowledge of the direction taken" : the extreme compression is again characteristic of the Miltonic style.

17. **stubborn'd** : "made stubborn or firm."

19. **Coeus . . . Briarëus** : sons of Uranus and Ge ; Gyges and Briarëus were giants with 100 arms and 50 heads. Here Keats, like Milton, uses a succession of proper names to add sonority to the verse.

20. **Typhon** : a monster, described sometimes as a hurricane (hence *typhoon*) and sometimes as a fire-breathing giant.

**Dolor** : there was no Titan or giant of this name, but Keats apparently took the name from the Latin author Hyginus, where the personified abstraction *Dolor* (grief) is mentioned in close connection with the Titans. **Porphyrion** : one of the giants who fought on the side of Saturn against Jupiter.

22. **pent . . . breath** : "confined in places where it was hard to breathe."

23. **opaque element** : "thick air."

28. **sanguine . . . pulse** : "with fevered, pulsing flow of blood."

29. **Mnemosyne** : Memory, a daughter of Uranus.

30. **Phoebe** : daughter of Uranus and Ge, and really the grandmother of the moon-goddess Phoebe. Keats here confuses the two goddesses.

32. **for the main** : "for the most part." **covert** : "shelter."

33. **scarce . . . life** : "scarcely appearing to live."

34. **cirque . . . moor** : Keats obviously has Stonehenge in mind : the pictorial simile is one of his finest.

41. **Creüs** : another son of Uranus and brother of Saturn, as were also Iäpetus (l. 44), and Cottus (l. 49) who was not a Titan but a giant like Briarëus (see note on Book II., l. 19).

45. **plashy** : "speckled, as if with splashes of dye."

46. **gorge** : "throat."

47. **and because** : *i.e.* "and it was dead because."

53. **Asia** : generally reputed the daughter of Oceanus and Tethys. Keats gives her a new parentage—Tellus, the Earth, and Kaf, a

mythical mountain mentioned in the Arabian Nights. She is identified with the continent Asia ; hence *dusky face* (l. 56).

55. *though feminine* : it would be interesting to know what incident, when he walked the hospitals, gave Keats the curious idea that it is easier to bear girls than boys.

61. *as hope . . . leans* : critics have objected to this mingling of classical mythology and hope with her anchor, but all the great Elizabethan writers draw indiscriminately upon pagan and Christian symbolism.

66. *shadow'd Enceladus* : *i.e.* Enceladus cast a shadow ; Enceladus was usually identified with Typhon, but Keats makes them two persons.

70. *was hurling* : *i.e.* imagined himself already hurling. *second war* : *i.e.* the war against Zeus, in which the Titans hurled mountains at him.

73. *Atlas* : son of Iāpetus and Asia : he later took part in the Titans' war against Zeus and was condemned as a punishment to bear heaven on his head and hands.

74. *Phorcus . . . Gorgons* : Phorcus was a sea-god, the son of Pontus and Ge ; Ceto bore him the three monstrous maidens, the gorgons, whose hair was serpents and who had wings, brazen claws and enormous teeth. Medusa, who alone of the gorgons was mortal, was killed by Perseus : her head was so terrible that anyone looking upon it was changed into stone.

75. *Oceanus* : he was the one Titan who had not joined in war against Zeus and the other Olympians.

76. *Clymene* : generally identified with Asia, whom, however, Keats made a different goddess with different parents (see note on Book II., l. 53).

77. *Themis* : another daughter of Uranus and Ge.

78. *Ops* : identical with Cybele (see note on Book II., l. 4).

79. *more than* : we should say *any more than*.

82. *when the Muse's . . . flight ?* : *i.e.* "when the poet is about to sing a loftier strain, who shall delay him ?" The nine Muses, daughters of Zeus and Mnemosyne, were the goddesses who inspired song ; later, they were regarded as presiding over the different kinds of poetry and the arts and sciences.

92. *supreme* : the word is here probably stressed on both syllables, thus emphasising the majesty of Saturn.

95. *spleen* : "anger," the spleen being formerly considered the seat of anger.

97. *mortal* : probably *such that it changed him to a mortal*, *i.e.* robbed him of his divinity ; actually, of course, Saturn, though dethroned, did not lose his immortality.



98. **disanointing** : *i.e.* such that it undid the effects of the anointing oil used at a coronation : Saturn is no longer king.

99. **kept her still** : "kept herself motionless."

120. **utterless** : "unutterable."

122. **Such . . . pines** : the echo-effect of this half-repetition of l. 116 itself suggests the reverberant roar in the pines.

128. **dinn'd** : "filled with noise"; for the conciseness attained by the coinage, cp. *mountain'd world* in l. 123. **silverly** : *silver*, as applied to sound, is one of Keats's favourite words.

133. **spirit-leaved book** : presumably *book whose leaves were written by spirits* : the book appears to be Keats's invention.

140. **element** : there were thought to be four elements—earth, air, fire, and water—out of which everything else was composed.

153. **the first-born . . . gods** : Saturn and his brothers and sisters were the first gods to be born : Uranus sprang from primeval Chaos. See below, ll. 191-200.

155. **untremendous** : "not to be trembled at."

165. **astonied** : "astonished."

168. **Sophist . . . grove** : the sophists of ancient Athens were wise men (sages) who taught, often out-of-doors, philosophy, rhetoric, and politics.

171. **first-endeavouring** : a reference to the fact that he is *beginning* his speech.

176. **bellows unto ire** : "incitement to anger," anger being treated as a fire.

183. **atom-universe** : a reference to the theory developed by Lucretius (95 B.C.-52 B.C.) in his *De Rerum Natura* that the whole universe is formed from minute atoms.

185. **only . . . supremacy** : *i.e.* Saturn is so high above others that he misses small points obvious to meaner minds.

192. **Light . . . broil** : *i.e.* light, which sprang from the internal conflict of darkness and chaos.

202. **to whom 'tis pain** : "pain, that is, for those who find truth painful."

204-5. **to envisage . . . sovereignty** : "the true height of supremacy is the ability to look facts in the face calmly."

208. **show beyond** : "appear superior to."

214. **pass** : "surpass."

240. **dolorous** : "sad."

244. **poz'd** : "posed, perplexed, at a loss for a retort."

250. **hectic** : "fevered."

256. **bode of evil** : "prophecy evil."

270. **mouthed shell** : some of the earliest musical instruments were made from the shells of animals.

277. **drown . . . ears** : "deafen me and make me listen."

293. **Apollo** : the god of poetry and song, son of Zeus.

304. **Enceladus** : see note on Book II., l. 66.

305. **the ponderous waves** : the whole of this passage gives one of the best examples of Keats's use of onomatopoeia and word-harmony.

310. **Or to . . . Gods** : it has been ingeniously conjectured that the true reading should be *Or to the over-foolish, giant-gods* ?

312. **Jove** : Zeus, son of Saturn, who had led the rebellion, showering thunderbolts upon his father and the other ancient gods.

319-20. **Dost . . . seas** : Enceladus is addressing Oceanus, who was cast down into the sea by the revolting Olympian deities.

365. **mantled** : "covered as with a mantle."

369-70. **the misery . . . itself** : *i.e.* the wretchedness of the dethroned gods, who could now, in the light of Hyperion the sun-god, see how miserable they appeared.

371. **Numidian** : Numidia was the name of a country of N. Africa ; the reference is thus to the short curly hair of the negroes.

374. **Memnon's image** : there was a statue of Memnon, the son of Tithonus and Aurora (the dawn), near Thebes, which uttered a mournful sound when the first beams of the sun struck it, as if Memnon were greeting his mother.

### BOOK III.

5-6. **A solitary . . . grief** : Keats's brother Tom had just died. **antheming** : "commemorating in an anthem."

9. **bewildered** : a transferred epithet ; in sense it qualifies *Divinity*.

10. **Delphic** : connected with Delphi, a small town in Greece, famous for its oracle of Apollo, the god of poetry and of the sun.

12. **Dorian** : the Dorians, one of the great Greek tribes, whose name is associated with a special mode of music, characterised by its severe tone, and particularly suited for religious and martial occasions.

13. **Father of all verse** : Apollo.

23. **Cyclades** : a group of islands in the Aegean Sea, which lay in a circle round Delos, the most important of them : upon Delos Latona bore Apollo and his twin-sister Artemis.

26. **In which . . . song** : "in which there is no wind harsher than Zephyr, the West wind."

29. **Giant of the Sun** : Hyperion.

43. **golden bow** : Apollo is frequently represented in ancient art with a bow and arrows : his bow is here golden, probably because he is the sun-god who shoots golden rays.

44. **suffused** : "filled with tears."

46. **an awful goddess** : Mnemosyne or Memory, daughter of Uranus and mother of the Muses. See l. 82.

74. **witless** : "unconsciously"; "without thought."

92. **liegeless** : "without a liege-lord, unconquered."

93. **aspirant** : "aspiring."

114. **grey** : "old," a notable example of Keats's instinctive choice of a beautiful epithet.

115. **sovrán** : "sovereign."

119. **peerless** : "unequalled"; the placing of the noun *elixir* between two adjectives is a Miltonic device.

128. **pale immortal death** : another of Keats's beautiful and pregnant phrases : see also the striking *die into life* (l. 130).

129. **convulse** : "convulsion."

132. **kept undulation** : "waved incessantly."



ISABELLA ;  
OR  
THE POT OF BASIL.

I.

FAIR Isabel, poor simple Isabel !

Lorenzo, a young palmer in Love's eye !  
They could not in the self-same mansion dwell

Without some stir of heart, some malady ;  
They could not sit at meals but feel how well 5

It soothed each to be the other by ;  
They could not, sure, beneath the same roof sleep  
But to each other dream, and nightly weep.

II.

With every morn their love grew tenderer,  
With every eve deeper and tenderer still ; 10

He might not in house, field, or garden stir,  
But her full shape would all his seeing fill ;

And his continual voice was pleasanter  
To her, than noise of trees or hidden rill ;  
Her lute-string gave an echo of his name, 15  
She spoilt her half-done broidery with the same.

III.

He knew whose gentle hand was at the latch  
Before the door had given her to his eyes ;  
And from her chamber-window he would catch  
Her beauty farther than the falcon spies ; 20

And constant as her vespers would he watch,  
 Because her face was turn'd to the same skies ;  
 And with sick longing all the night outwear,  
 To hear her morning-step upon the stair.

## IV.

A whole long month of May in this sad plight           25  
 Made their cheeks paler by the break of June :  
 " To-morrow will I bow to my delight,  
 To-morrow will I ask my lady's boon."—  
 " O may I never see another night,  
 Lorenzo, if thy lips breathe not love's tune."—   30  
 So spake they to their pillows ; but, alas,  
 Honeyless days and days did he let pass ;

## V.

Until sweet Isabella's untouch'd cheek  
 Fell sick within the rose's just domain,  
 Fell thin as a young mother's, who doth seek           35  
 By every lull to cool her infant's pain :  
 " How ill she is," said he, " I may not speak,  
 And yet I will, and tell my love all plain :  
 If looks speak love-laws, I will drink her tears,  
 And at the least 'twill startle off her cares."       40

## VI.

So said he one fair morning, and all day  
 His heart beat awfully against his side ;  
 And to his heart he inwardly did pray  
 For power to speak ; but still the ruddy tide  
 Stifled his voice, and puls'd resolve away—           45  
 Fever'd his high conceit of such a bride,  
 Yet brought him to the meekness of a child :  
 Alas ! when passion is both meek and wild !

## VII.

So once more he had wak'd and anguished  
A dreary night of love and misery, 50  
If Isabel's quick eye had not been wed  
To every symbol on his forehead high ;  
She saw it waxing very pale and dead,  
And straight all flush'd ; so, lisped tenderly,  
“ Lorenzo ! ”—here she ceas'd her timid quest, 55  
But in her tone and look he read the rest.

## VIII.

“ O Isabella, I can half perceive  
That I may speak my grief into thine ear ;  
If thou didst ever anything believe,  
Believe how I love thee, believe how near 60  
My soul is to its doom : I would not grieve  
Thy hand by unwelcome pressing, would not fear  
Thine eyes by gazing ; but I cannot live  
Another night, and not my passion shrive.

## IX.

“ Love ! thou art leading me from wintry cold, 65  
Lady ! thou leadest me to summer clime,  
And I must taste the blossoms that unfold  
In its ripe warmth this gracious morning time.”  
So said, his erewhile timid lips grew bold,  
And poesied with hers in dewy rhyme : 70  
Great bliss was with them, and great happiness  
Grew, like a lusty flower in June's caress.

## X.

Parting they seem'd to tread upon the air,  
Twin roses by the zephyr blown apart

Only to meet again more close, and share 75  
 The inward fragrance of each other's heart.  
 She, to her chamber gone, a ditty fair  
 Sang, of delicious love and honey'd dart ;  
 He with light steps went up a western hill,  
 And bade the sun farewell, and joy'd his fill. 80

## XI.

All close they met again, before the dusk  
 Had taken from the stars its pleasant veil,  
 All close they met, all eves, before the dusk  
 Had taken from the stars its pleasant veil,  
 Close in a bower of hyacinth and musk, 85  
 Unknown of any, free from whispering tale.  
 Ah ! better had it been for ever so,  
 Than idle ears should pleasure in their woe.

## XII.

Were they unhappy then ?—It cannot be—  
 Too many tears for lovers have they shed, 90  
 Too many sighs give we to them in fee,  
 Too much of pity after they are dead,  
 Too many doleful stories do we see,  
 Whose matter in bright gold were best be read ;  
 Except in such a page where Theseus' spouse 95  
 Over the pathless waves towards him bows.

## XIII.

But, for the general award of love,  
 The little sweet doth kill much bitterness ;  
 Though Dido silent is in under-grove,  
 And Isabella's was a great distress, 100  
 Though young Lorenzo in warm Indian clove  
 Was not embalm'd, this truth is not the less—



Even bees, the little almsmen of spring-bowers,  
 Know there is richest juice in poison-flowers.

## XIV.

With her two brothers this fair lady dwelt,	105
Enriched from ancestral merchandize,	
And for them many a weary hand did swelt	
In torched mines and noisy factories,	
And many once proud quiver'd loins did melt	
In blood from stinging whip ;—with hollow eyes	110
Many all day in dazzling river stood,	
To take the rich-or'd driftings of the flood.	

## XV.

For them the Ceylon diver held his breath,	
And went all naked to the hungry shark ;	
For them his ears gush'd blood ; for them in death	115
The seal on the cold ice with piteous bark	
Lay full of darts ; for them alone did seethe	
A thousand men in troubles wide and dark :	
Half-ignorant, they turn'd an easy wheel,	
That set sharp racks at work, to pinch and peel.	120

## XVI.

Why were they proud ? Because their marble founts	
Gush'd with more pride than do a wretch's tears ?—	
Why were they proud ? Because fair orange-mounts	
Were of more soft ascent than lazar stairs ?—	
Why were they proud ? Because red-lin'd accounts	125
Were richer than the songs of Grecian years ?—	
Why were they proud ? again we ask aloud,	
Why in the name of Glory were they proud ?	

## XVII.

Yet were these Florentines as self-retired  
 In hungry pride and gainful cowardice, 130  
 As two close Hebrews in that land inspired,  
 Pal'd in and vineyarded from beggar-spies ;  
 The hawks of ship-mast forests—the untired  
 And pannier'd mules for ducats and old lies—  
 Quick cat's-paws on the generous stray-away,— 135  
 Great wits in Spanish, Tuscan, and Malay.

## XVIII.

How was it these same ledger-men could spy  
 Fair Isabella in her downy nest ?  
 How could they find out in Lorenzo's eye  
 A straying from his toil ? Hot Egypt's pest 140  
 Into their vision covetous and sly !  
 How could these money-bags see east and west ?—  
 Yet so they did—and every dealer fair  
 Must see behind, as doth the hunted hare.

## XIX.

O eloquent and famed Boccaccio ! 145  
 Of thee we now should ask forgiving boon,  
 And of thy spicy myrtles as they blow,  
 And of thy roses amorous of the moon,  
 And of thy lilies, that do paler grow  
 Now they can no more hear thy ghittern's tune, 150  
 For venturing syllables that ill beseem  
 The quiet glooms of such a piteous theme.

## XX.

Grant thou a pardon here, and then the tale  
 Shall move on soberly, as it is meet ;

There is no other crime, no mad assail 155  
 To make old prose in modern rhyme more sweet :  
 But it is done—succeed the verse or fail—  
 To honour thee, and thy gone spirit greet ;  
 To stead thee as a verse in English tongue,  
 An echo of thee in the north-wind sung. 160

## XXI.

These brethren having found by many signs  
 What love Lorenzo for their sister had,  
 And how she lov'd him too, each unconfines  
 His bitter thoughts to other, well nigh mad  
 That he, the servant of their trade designs, 165  
 Should in their sister's love be blithe and glad,  
 When 'twas their plan to coax her by degrees  
 To some high noble and his olive-trees.

## XXII.

And many a jealous conference had they,  
 And many times they bit their lips alone, 170  
 Before they fix'd upon a surest way  
 To make the youngster for his crime atone ;  
 And at the last, these men of cruel clay  
 Cut Mercy with a sharp knife to the bone ;  
 For they resolved in some forest dim 175  
 To kill Lorenzo, and there bury him.

## XXIII.

So on a pleasant morning, as he leant  
 Into the sun-rise, o'er the balulstrade  
 Of the garden-terrace, towards him they bent  
 Their footing through the dew's ; and to him said, 180  
 " You seem there in the quiet of content,  
 Lorenzo, and we are most loth to invade

Calm speculation ; but if you are wise,  
Bestride your steed while cold is in the skies.

## XXIV.

To-day we purpose, aye, this hour we mount 185  
To spur three leagues towards the Apennine ;  
Come down, we pray thee, ere the hot sun count  
His dewy rosary on the eglantine."  
Lorenzo, courteously, as he was wont,  
Bow'd a fair greeting to these serpents' whine ; 190  
And went in haste, to get in readiness,  
With belt, and spur, and bracing huntsman's dress.

## XXV.

And as he to the court-yard pass'd along,  
Each third step did he pause, and listen'd oft  
If he could hear his lady's matin-song, 195  
Or the light whisper of her footstep soft ;  
And as he thus over his passion hung,  
He heard a laugh full musical aloft ;  
When, looking up, he saw her features bright  
Smile through an in-door lattice, all delight. 200

## XXVI.

" Love, Isabel ! " said he, " I was in pain  
Lest I should miss to bid thee a good morrow :  
Ah ! what if I should lose thee, when so fain  
I am to stifle all the heavy sorrow  
Of a poor three hours' absence ? but we'll gain 205  
Out of the amorous dark what day doth borrow.  
Good bye ! I'll soon be back."—" Good bye ! " said she :—  
And as he went she chanted merrily.

## XXVII.

So the two brothers and their murder'd man  
Rode past fair Florence, to where Arno's stream 210  
Gurgles through straiten'd banks, and still doth fan  
Itself with dancing bulrush, and the bream  
Keeps head against the freshets. Sick and wan  
The brothers' faces in the ford did seem,  
Lorenzo's flush with love.—They pass'd the water 215  
Into a forest quiet for the slaughter.

## XXVIII.

There was Lorenzo slain and buried in,  
There in that forest did his great love cease ;  
Ah ! when a soul doth thus its freedom win,  
It aches in loneliness—is ill at peace 220  
As the break-covert blood-hounds of such sin :  
They dipp'd their swords in the water, and did tease  
Their horses homeward, with convulsed spur,  
Each richer by his being a murderer.

## XXIX.

They told their sister how, with sudden speed, 225  
Lorenzo had ta'en ship for foreign lands,  
Because of some great urgency and need  
In their affairs, requiring trusty hands.  
Poor girl ! put on thy stifling widow's weed,  
And 'scape at once from Hope's accursed bands ; 230  
To-day thou wilt not see him, nor to-morrow,  
And the next day will be a day of sorrow.

## XXX.

She weeps alone for pleasures not to be ;  
Sorely she wept until the night came on,

And then, in stead of love, O misery ! 235  
 She brooded o'er the luxury alone :  
 His image in the dusk she seem'd to see,  
 And to the silence made a gentle moan,  
 Spreading her perfect arms upon the air,  
 And on her couch low murmuring " Where ? O where ? " 240

## XXXI.

But Selfishness, Love's cousin, held not long  
 Its fiery vigil in her single breast ;  
 She fretted for the golden hour, and hung  
 Upon the time with feverish unrest—  
 Not long—for soon into her heart a throng 245  
 Of higher occupants, a richer zest,  
 Came tragic ; passion not to be subdu'd,  
 And sorrow for her love in travels rude.

## XXXII.

In the mid days of autumn, on their eves  
 The breath of Winter comes from far away, 250  
 And the sick west continually bereaves  
 Of some gold tinge, and plays a roundelay  
 Of death among the bushes and the leaves,  
 To make all bare before he dares to stray  
 From his north cavern. So sweet Isabel 255  
 By gradual decay from beauty fell,

## XXXIII.

Because Lorenzo came not. Oftentimes  
 She ask'd her brothers, with an eye all pale,  
 Striving to be itself, what dungeon climes  
 Could keep him off so long ? They spake a tale 260  
 Time after time, to quiet her. Their crimes  
 Came on them, like a smoke from Hinnom's vale ;

And every night in dreams they groan'd aloud,  
To see their sister in her snowy shroud.

## XXXIV.

And she had died in drowsy ignorance, 265  
But for a thing more deadly dark than all ;  
It came like a fierce potion, drunk by chance,  
Which saves a sick man from the feather'd pall  
For some few gasping moments ; like a lance,  
Waking an Indian from his cloudy hall 270  
With cruel pierce, and bringing him again  
Sense of the gnawing fire at heart and brain.

## XXXV.

It was a vision.—In the drowsy gloom,  
The dull of midnight, at her couch's foot  
Lorenzo stood, and wept : the forest tomb 275  
Had marr'd his glossy hair which once could shoot  
Lustre into the sun, and put cold doom  
Upon his lips, and taken the soft lute  
From his lorn voice, and past his loamed ears  
Had made a miry channel for his tears. 280

## XXXVI.

Strange sound it was, when the pale shadow spake ;  
For there was striving, in its piteous tongue,  
To speak as when on earth it was awake,  
And Isabella on its music hung :  
Languor there was in it, and tremulous shake, 285  
As in a palsied Druid's harp unstrung ;  
And through it moan'd a ghostly under-song,  
Like hoarse night-gusts sepulchral briars among.

## XXXVII.

Its eyes, though wild, were still all dewy bright  
     With love, and kept all phantom fear aloof                   290  
 From the poor girl by magic of their light,  
     The while it did unthread the horrid woof  
 Of the late darken'd time,—the murderous spite  
     Of pride and avarice,—the dark pine roof  
 In the forest,—and the sodden turfed dell,                   295  
 Where, without any word, from stabs he fell.

## XXXVIII.

Saying moreover, “ Isabel, my sweet !  
     Red whortle-berries droop above my head,  
 And a large flint-stone weighs upon my feet ;  
     Around me beeches and high chestnuts shed                   300  
 Their leaves and prickly nuts ; a sheep-fold bleat  
     Comes from beyond the river to my bed :  
 Go, shed one tear upon my heather-bloom,  
 And it shall comfort me within the tomb.

## XXXIX.

I am a shadow now, alas ! alas !                               305  
     Upon the skirts of human-nature dwelling  
 Alone : I chant alone the holy mass,  
     While little sounds of life are round me kneeling,  
 And glossy bees at noon do fieldward pass,  
     And many a chapel bell the hour is telling,                   310  
 Paining me through : those sounds grow strange to me,  
 And thou art distant in Humanity.

## XL.

I know what was, I feel full well what is,  
     And I should rage, if spirits could go mad ;



Though I forget the taste of earthly bliss, 315  
That paleness warms my grave, as though I had  
A Seraph chosen from the bright abyss  
To be my spouse : thy paleness makes me glad ;  
Thy beauty grows upon me, and I feel  
A greater love through all my essence steal." 320

## XLI.

The Spirit mourn'd " Adieu ! "—dissolv'd and left  
The atom darkness in a slow turmoil ;  
As when of healthful midnight sleep bereft,  
Thinking on rugged hours and fruitless toil,  
We put our eyes into a pillowy cleft, 325  
And see the spangly gloom froth up and boil :  
It made sad Isabella's eyelids ache,  
And in the dawn she started up awake ;

## XLII.

" Ha ! ha ! " said she, " I knew not this hard life,  
I thought the worst was simple misery ; 330  
I thought some Fate with pleasure or with strife  
Portion'd us—happy days, or else to die ;  
But there is crime—a brother's bloody knife !  
Sweet Spirit, thou hast school'd my infancy :  
I'll visit thee for this, and kiss thine eyes, 335  
And greet thee morn and even in the skies."

## XLIII.

When the full morning came, she had devised  
How she might secret to the forest hie ;  
How she might find the clay, so dearly prized,  
And sing to it one latest lullaby ; 340  
How her short absence might be unsurmised,  
While she the inmost of the dream would try.

Resolv'd, she took with her an aged nurse,  
And went into that dismal forest-hearse.

## XLIV.

See, as they creep along the river side, 345  
How she doth whisper to that aged Dame,  
And, after looking round the champaign wide,  
Shows her a knife.—“What feverous hectic flame  
Burns in thee, child?—What good can thee betide,  
That thou should'st smile again?”—The evening came,  
And they had found Lorenzo's earthy bed ; 351  
The flint was there, the berries at his head.

## XLV.

Who hath not loiter'd in a green church-yard,  
And let his spirit, like a demon-mole,  
Work through the clayey soil and gravel hard, 355  
To see scull, coffin'd bones, and funeral stole ;  
Pitying each form that hungry Death hath marr'd,  
And filling it once more with human soul ?  
Ah ! this is holiday to what was felt  
When Isabella by Lorenzo knelt. 360

## XLVI.

She gaz'd into the fresh-thrown mould, as though  
One glance did fully all its secrets tell ;  
Clearly she saw, as other eyes would know  
Pale limbs at bottom of a crystal well ;  
Upon the murderous spot she seem'd to grow, 365  
Like to a native lily of the dell :  
Then with her knife, all sudden, she began  
To dig more fervently than misers can.

## XLVII.

Soon she turn'd up a soiled glove, whereon  
     Her silk had play'd in purple phantasies, 370  
 She kiss'd it with a lip more chill than stone,  
     And put it in her bosom, where it dries  
 And freezes utterly unto the bone  
     Those dainties made to still an infant's cries :  
 Then 'gan she work again ; nor stay'd her care, 375  
 But to throw back at times her veiling hair.

## XLVIII.

That old nurse stood beside her wondering,  
     Until her heart felt pity to the core  
 At sight of such a dismal labouring,  
     And so she kneeled, with her locks of hoar, 380  
 And put her lean hands to the horrid thing :  
     Three hours they labour'd at this travail sore ;  
 At last they felt the kernel of the grave,  
 And Isabella did not stamp and rave.

## XLIX.

Ah ! wherefore all this wormy circumstance ? 385  
     Why linger at the yawning tomb so long ?  
 O for the gentleness of old Romance,  
     The simple plaining of a minstrel's song !  
 Fair reader, at the old tale take a glance,  
     For here, in truth, it doth not well belong 390  
 To speak :—O turn thee to the very tale,  
 And taste the music of that vision pale.

## L.

With duller steel than the Perséan sword  
     They cut away no formless monster's head,

But one, whose gentleness did well accord 395  
 With death, as life. The ancient harps have said,  
 Love never dies, but lives, immortal Lord :  
 If love impersonate was ever dead,  
 Pale Isabella kiss'd it, and low moan'd.  
 'Twas love ; cold,—dead indeed, but not dethron'd. 400

## LI.

In anxious secrecy they took it home,  
 And then the prize was all for Isabel :  
 She calm'd its wild hair with a golden comb,  
 And all around each eye's sepulchral cell  
 Pointed each fringed lash ; the smeared loam 405  
 With tears, as chilly as a dripping well,  
 She drench'd away :—and still she comb'd, and kept  
 Sighing all day—and still she kiss'd, and wept.

## LII.

Then in a silken scarf,—sweet with the dews  
 Of precious flowers pluck'd in Araby, 410  
 And divine liquids come with odorous ooze  
 Through the cold serpent-pipe refreshfully,—  
 She wrapp'd it up ; and for its tomb did choose  
 A garden-pot, wherein she laid it by,  
 And cover'd it with mould, and o'er it set 415  
 Sweet Basil, which her tears kept ever wet.

## LIII.

And she forgot the stars, the moon, and sun,  
 And she forgot the blue above the trees,  
 And she forgot the dells where waters run,  
 And she forgot the chilly autumn breeze ; 420

She had no knowledge when the day was done,  
 And the new morn she saw not : but in peace  
 Hung over her sweet Basil evermore,  
 And moisten'd it with tears unto the core.

## LIV.

And so she ever fed it with thin tears, 425  
 Whence thick, and green, and beautiful it grew,  
 So that it smelt more balmy than its peers  
 Of Basil-tufts in Florence ; for it drew  
 Nurture besides, and life, from human fears,  
 From the fast mouldering head there shut from view : 430  
 So that the jewel, safely casketed,  
 Came forth, and in perfumed leafits spread.

## LV.

O Melancholy, linger here awhile !  
 O Music, Music, breathe despondingly !  
 O Echo, Echo, from some sombre isle, 435  
 Unknown, Lethean, sigh to us—O sigh !  
 Spirits in grief, lift up your heads, and smile ;  
 Lift up your heads, sweet Spirits, heavily,  
 And make a pale light in your cypress glooms,  
 Tinting with silver wan your marble tombs. 440

## LVI.

Moan hither, all ye syllables of woe,  
 From the deep throat of sad Melpomene !  
 Through bronzed lyre in tragic order go,  
 And touch the strings into a mystery ;  
 Sound mournfully upon the winds and low ; 445  
 For simple Isabel is soon to be

Among the dead : She withers, like a palm  
Cut by an Indian for its juicy balm.

## LVII.

O leave the palm to wither by itself ;  
Let not quick Winter chill its dying hour !— 450  
It may not be—those Baälites of pelf,  
Her brethren, noted the continual shower  
From her dead eyes ; and many a curious elf,  
Among her kindred, wonder'd that such dower  
Of youth and beauty should be thrown aside 455  
By one mark'd out to be a Noble's bride.

## LVIII.

And, furthermore, her brethren wonder'd much  
Why she sat drooping by the Basil green,  
And why it flourish'd, as by magic touch ;  
Greatly they wonder'd what the thing might mean :  
They could not surely give belief, that such 461  
A very nothing would have power to wean  
Her from her own fair youth, and pleasures gay,  
And even remembrance of her love's delay.

## LIX.

Therefore they watch'd a time when they might sift 465  
This hidden whim ; and long they watch'd in vain ;  
For seldom did she go to chapel-shrift,  
And seldom felt she any hunger-pain ;  
And when she left, she hurried back, as swift  
As bird on wing to breast its eggs again ; 470  
And, patient as a hen-bird, sat her there  
Beside her Basil, weeping through her hair.

## LX.

Yet they contriv'd to steal the Basil-pot,  
 And to examine it in secret place :  
 The thing was vile with green and livid spot, 475  
 And yet they knew it was Lorenzo's face :  
 The guerdon of their murder they had got,  
 And so left Florence in a moment's space,  
 Never to turn again.—Away they went,  
 With blood upon their heads, to banishment. 480

## LXI.

O Melancholy, turn thine eyes away !  
 O Music, Music, breathe despondingly !  
 O Echo, Echo, on some other day,  
 From isles Lethean, sigh to us—O sigh !  
 Spirits of grief, sing not your “ Well-a-way ! ” 485  
 For Isabel, sweet Isabel, will die ;  
 Will die a death too lone and incomplete,  
 Now they have ta'en away her Basil sweet.

## LXII.

Piteous she look'd on dead and senseless things,  
 Asking for her lost Basil amorously ; 490  
 And with melodious chuckle in the strings  
 Of her lorn voice, she oftentimes would cry  
 After the Pilgrim in his wanderings,  
 To ask him where her Basil was ; and why  
 'Twas hid from her : “ For cruel 'tis,” said she, 495  
 “ To steal my Basil-pot away from me.”

## LXIII.

And so she pin'd and so she died forlorn,  
 Imploring for her Basil to the last.

No heart was there in Florence but did mourn

In pity of her love, so overcast.

500

And a sad ditty of this story born

From mouth to mouth through all the country pass'd :

Still is the burthen sung—" O cruelty,

To steal my Basil-pot away from me ! "



## THE EVE OF ST. AGNES.

---

### I.

St. Agnes' Eve—Ah, bitter chill it was !  
The owl, for all his feathers, was a-cold ;  
The hare limp'd trembling through the frozen grass,  
And silent was the flock in woolly fold :  
Numb were the Beadsman's fingers, while he told       5  
His rosary, and while his frosted breath,  
Like pious incense from a censer old,  
Seem'd taking flight for heaven, without a death,  
Past the sweet Virgin's picture, while his prayer he saith.

### II.

His prayer he saith, this patient, holy man ;       10  
Then takes his lamp, and riseth from his knees,  
And back returneth, meagre, barefoot, wan,  
Along the chapel aisle by slow degrees :  
The sculptur'd dead, on each side, seem to freeze,  
Emprison'd in black, purgatorial rails :       15  
Knights, ladies, praying in dumb orat'ries,  
He passeth by ; and his weak spirit fails  
To think how they may ache in icy hoods and mails.

### III.

Northward he turneth through a little door,  
And scarce three steps, ere Music's golden tongue       20  
Flatter'd to tears this aged man and poor ;

But no—already had his deathbell rung :  
 The joys of all his life were said and sung :  
 His was harsh penance on St. Agnes' Eve :  
 Another way he went, and soon among 25  
 Rough ashes sat he for his soul's reprieve,  
 And all night kept awake, for sinners' sake to grieve.

## IV.

That ancient Beadsman heard the prelude soft ;  
 And so it chanc'd, for many a door was wide,  
 From hurry to and fro. Soon, up aloft, 30  
 The silver, snarling trumpets 'gan to chide :  
 The level chambers, ready with their pride,  
 Were glowing to receive a thousand guests :  
 The carved angels, ever eager-ey'd,  
 Star'd, where upon their heads the cornice rests, 35  
 With hair blown back, and wings put cross-wise on their  
 breasts.

## V.

At length burst in the argent revelry,  
 With plume, tiara, and all rich array,  
 Numerous as shadows haunting faerily  
 The brain, new stuff'd, in youth, with triumphs gay 40  
 Of old romance. These let us wish away,  
 And turn, sole-thoughted, to one Lady there,  
 Whose heart had brooded, all that wintry day,  
 On love, and wing'd St. Agnes' saintly care,  
 As she had heard old dames full many times declare. 45

## VI.

They told her how, upon St. Agnes' Eve,  
 Young virgins might have visions of delight,  
 And soft adorings from their loves receive  
 Upon the honey'd middle of the night,

If ceremonies due they did aright ; 50  
 As, supperless to bed they must retire,  
 And couch supine their beauties, lily white ;  
 Nor look behind, nor sideways, but require  
 Of Heaven with upward eyes for all that they desire.

## VII.

Full of this whim was thoughtful Madeline : 55  
 The music, yearning like a God in pain,  
 She scarcely heard : her maiden eyes divine,  
 Fix'd on the floor, saw many a sweeping train  
 Pass by—she heeded not at all : in vain  
 Came many a tiptoe, amorous cavalier, 60  
 And back retir'd ; not cool'd by high disdain,  
 But she saw not : her heart was elsewhere :  
 She sigh'd for Agnes' dreams, the sweetest of the year.

## VIII.

She danc'd along with vague, regardless eyes,  
 Anxious her lips, her breathing quick and short : 65  
 The hallow'd hour was near at hand : she sighs  
 Amid the timbrels, and the throng'd resort  
 Of whisperers in anger, or in sport ;  
 'Mid looks of love, defiance, hate, and scorn,  
 Hoodwink'd with faery fancy ; all amort, 70  
 Save to St. Agnes and her lambs unshorn,  
 And all the bliss to be before to-morrow morn.

## IX.

So, purposing each moment to retire,  
 She linger'd still. Meantime, across the moors,  
 Had come young Porphyro, with heart on fire 75  
 For Madeline. Beside the portal doors,  
 Buttress'd from moonlight, stands he, and implores

All saints to give him sight of Madeline,  
 But for one moment in the tedious hours,  
 That he might gaze and worship all unseen ; 80  
 Perchance speak, kneel, touch, kiss—in sooth such things  
 have been.

## X.

He ventures in : let no buzz'd whisper tell :  
 All eyes be muffled, or a hundred swords  
 Will storm his heart, Love's fev'rous citadel :  
 For him, those chambers held barbarian hordes, 85  
 Hyena foemen, and hot-blooded lords,  
 Whose very dogs would execrations howl  
 Against his lineage : not one breast affords  
 Him any mercy, in that mansion foul,  
 Save one old beldame, weak in body and in soul. 90

## XI.

Ah, happy chance ! the aged creature came,  
 Shuffling along with ivory-headed wand,  
 To where he stood, hid from the torch's flame,  
 Behind a broad hall-pillar, far beyond  
 The sound of merriment and chorus bland : 95  
 He startled her ; but soon she knew his face,  
 And grasp'd his fingers in her palsied hand,  
 Saying, " Mercy, Porphyro ! hie thee from this place ;  
 They are all here to-night, the whole blood-thirsty race !

## XII.

Get hence ! get hence ! there's dwarfish Hildebrand ; 100  
 He had a fever late, and in the fit  
 He cursed thee and thine, both house and land :  
 Then there's that old Lord Maurice, not a whit  
 More tame for his gray hairs—Alas me ! flit !

Flit like a ghost away.”—“ Ah, Gossip dear, 105  
 We’re safe enough ; here in this arm-chair sit,  
 And tell me how ”—“ Good Saints ! not here, not here ;  
 Follow me, child, or else these stones will be thy bier.”

## XIII.

He follow’d through a lowly arched way,  
 Brushing the cobwebs with his lofty plume, 110  
 And as she mutter’d “ Well-a—well-a-day ! ”  
 He found him in a little moonlight room,  
 Pale, lattic’d, chill, and silent as a tomb.  
 Now tell me where is Madeline,” said he,  
 O tell me, Angela, by the holy loom 115  
 Which none but secret sisterhood may see,  
 When they St. Agnes’ wool are weaving piously.”

## XIV.

“ St. Agnes ! Ah ! it is St. Agnes’ Eve—  
 Yet men will murder upon holy days :  
 Thou must hold water in a witch’s sieve, 120  
 And be liege-lord of all the Elves and Fays,  
 To venture so : it fills me with amaze  
 To see thee, Porphyro !—St. Agnes’ Eve !  
 God’s help ! my lady fair the conjuror plays  
 This very night : good angels her deceive ! 125  
 But let me laugh awhile, I’ve mickle time to grieve.”

## XV.

Feebly she laugheth in the languid moon,  
 While Porphyro upon her face doth look,  
 Like puzzled urchin on an aged crone  
 Who keepeth clos’d a wond’rous riddle-book, 130  
 As spectacled she sits in chimney nook.  
 But soon his eyes grew brilliant, when she told

His lady's purpose ; and he scarce could brook  
Tears, at the thought of those enchantments cold,  
And Madeline asleep in lap of legends old. 135

## XVI.

Sudden a thought came like a full-blown rose,  
Flushing his brow, and in his pained heart  
Made purple riot : then doth he propose  
A stratagem, that makes the beldame start :  
“ A cruel man and impious thou art : 140  
Sweet lady, let her pray, and sleep, and dream  
Alone with her good angels, far apart  
From wicked men like thee. Go, go !—I deem  
Thou canst not surely be the same that thou didst seem.”

## XVII.

“ I will not harm her, by all saints I swear,” 145  
Quoth Porphyro : “ O may I ne'er find grace  
When my weak voice shall whisper its last prayer,  
If one of her soft ringlets I displace,  
Or look with ruffian passion in her face :  
Good Angela, believe me by these tears ; 150  
Or I will, even in a moment's space,  
Awake with horrid shout, my foemen's ears,  
And beard them, though they be more fang'd than wolves  
and bears.”

## XVIII.

“ Ah ! why wilt thou affright a feeble soul ?  
A poor, weak, palsy-stricken, churchyard thing, 155  
Whose passing-bell may ere the midnight toll ;  
Whose prayers for thee, each morn and evening,  
Were never miss'd.”—Thus plaining, doth she bring  
A gentler speech from burning Porphyro ;

So woeful, and of such deep sorrowing, 160  
 That Angela gives promise she will do  
 Whatever he shall wish, betide her weal or woe.

## XIX.

Which was, to lead him, in close secrecy,  
 Even to Madeline's chamber, and there hide  
 Him in a closet, of such privacy 165  
 That he might see her beauty unesp'y'd,  
 And win perhaps that night a peerless bride,  
 While legion'd faeries pac'd the coverlet,  
 And pale enchantment held her sleepy-ey'd.  
 Never on such a night have lovers met, 170  
 Since Merlin paid his Demon all the monstrous debt.

## XX.

"It shall be as thou wishest," said the Dame :  
 "All cates and dainties shall be stored there  
 Quickly on this feast-night : by the tambour frame  
 Her own lute thou wilt see : no time to spare, 175  
 For I am slow and feeble, and scarce dare  
 On such a catering trust my dizzy head.  
 Wait here, my child, with patience ; kneel in prayer  
 The while : Ah ! thou must needs the lady wed,  
 Or may I never leave my grave among the dead." 180

## XXI.

So saying, she hobbled off with busy fear.  
 The lover's endless minutes slowly pass'd ;  
 The dame return'd, and whisper'd in his ear  
 To follow her ; with aged eyes aghast  
 From fright of dim espial. Safe at last, 185  
 Through many a dusky gallery, they gain

The maiden's chamber, silken, hush'd, and chaste ;  
 Where Porphyro took covert, pleas'd amain.  
 His poor guide hurried back with agues in her brain.

## XXII.

Her falt'ring hand upon the balustrade, 190  
 Old Angela was feeling for the stair,  
 When Madeline, St. Agnes' charmed maid,  
 Rose, like a mission'd spirit, unaware :  
 With silver taper's light, and pious care,  
 She turn'd, and down the aged gossip led 195  
 To a safe level matting. Now prepare,  
 Young Porphyro, for gazing on that bed ;  
 She comes, she comes again, like ring-dove fray'd and fled.

## XXIII.

Out went the taper as she hurried in ;  
 Its little smoke, in pallid moonshine, died : 200  
 She clos'd the door, she panted, all akin  
 To spirits of the air, and visions wide :  
 No uttered syllable, or, woe betide !  
 But to her heart, her heart was voluble,  
 Paining with eloquence her balmy side ; 205  
 As though a tongueless nightingale should swell  
 Her throat in vain, and die, heart-stifled, in her dell.

## XXIV.

A casement high and triple-arch'd there was,  
 All garlanded with carven imag'ries  
 Of fruits, and flowers, and bunches of knot-grass, 210  
 And diamonded with panes of quaint device,  
 Innumerable of stains and splendid dyes,  
 As are the tiger-moth's deep-damask'd wings ;



And in the midst, 'mong thousand heraldries,  
 And twilight saints, and dim emblazonings, 215  
 A shielded scutcheon blush'd with blood of queens and kings.

## XXV.

Full on this casement shone the wintry moon,  
 And threw warm gules on Madeline's fair breast,  
 As down she knelt for heaven's grace and boon ;  
 Rose-bloom fell on her hands, together prest, 220  
 And on her silver cross soft amethyst,  
 And on her hair a glory, like a saint :  
 She seem'd a splendid angel, newly drest,  
 Save wings, for heaven :—Porphyro grew faint :  
 She knelt, so pure a thing, so free from mortal taint. 225

## XXVI.

Anon his heart revives : her vespers done,  
 Of all its wreathed pearls her hair she frees ;  
 Unclasps her warmed jewels one by one ;  
 Loosens her fragrant boddice ; by degrees  
 Her rich attire creeps rustling to her knees : 230  
 Half-hidden, like a mermaid in sea-weed,  
 Pensive awhile she dreams awake, and sees,  
 In fancy, fair St. Agnes in her bed,  
 But dares not look behind, or all the charm is fled.

## XXVII.

Soon, trembling in her soft and chilly nest, 235  
 In sort of wakeful swoon, perplex'd she lay,  
 Until the poppi'd warmth of sleep oppress'd  
 Her soothed limbs, and soul fatigued away ;  
 Flown, like a thought, until the morrow-day ;  
 Blissfully haven'd both from joy and pain ;  
 Clasp'd like a missal where swart Paynims pray ; 240

Blinded alike from sunshine and from rain,  
As though a rose should shut, and be a bud again.

## XXVIII.

Stol'n to this paradise, and so entranced,  
Porphyro gaz'd upon her empty dress, 245  
And listen'd to her breathing, if it chanced  
To wake into a slumberous tenderness ;  
Which when he heard, that minute did he bless,  
And breath'd himself : then from the closet crept,  
Noiseless as fear in a wide wilderness, 250  
And over the hush'd carpet, silent, stept,  
And 'tween the curtains peep'd, where, lo !—how fast she  
slept.

## XXIX.

Then by the bed-side, where the faded moon  
Made a dim, silver twilight, soft he set  
A table, and, half anguish'd, threw thereon 255  
A cloth of woven crimson, gold, and jet :—  
O for some drowsy Morphean amulet !  
The boisterous, midnight, festive clarion,  
The kettle-drum, and far-heard clarinet,  
Affray his ears, though but in dying tone :— 260  
The hall door shuts again, and all the noise is gone.

## XXX.

And still she slept an azure-lidded sleep,  
In blanched linen, smooth, and lavender'd,  
While he from forth the closet brought a heap  
Of candied apple, quince, and plum, and gourd ; 265  
With jellies soother than the creamy curd,  
And lucent syrops, tinct with cinnamon ;  
Manna and dates, in argosy transferr'd

From Fez ; and spiced dainties, every one,  
From silken Samarcand to cedar'd Lebanon. 270

## XXXI.

These delicacies he heap'd with glowing hand  
On golden dishes and in baskets bright  
Of wreathed silver : sumptuous they stand  
In the retired quiet of the night,  
Filling the chilly room with perfume light.— 275  
“ And now, my love, my seraph fair, awake !  
Thou art my heaven, and I thine eremite :  
Open thine eyes, for meek St. Agnes' sake,  
Or I shall drowse beside thee, so my soul doth ache.”

## XXXII.

Thus whispering, his warm, unnerved arm 280  
Sank in her pillow. Shaded was her dream  
By the dusk curtains :—'twas a midnight charm  
Impossible to melt as iced stream :  
The lustrous salvers in the moonlight gleam ;  
Broad golden fringe upon the carpet lies : 285  
It seem'd he never, never could redeem  
From such a stedfast spell his lady's eyes ;  
So mus'd awhile, entoil'd in woofed phantasies.

## XXXIII.

Awakening up, he took her hollow lute,—  
Tumultuous,—and, in chords that tenderest be, 290  
He play'd an ancient ditty, long since mute,  
In Provence call'd, “ La belle dame sans mercy : ”  
Close to her ear touching the melody ;—  
Wherewith disturb'd, she utter'd a soft moan :  
He ceas'd—she panted quick—and suddenly 295

Her blue affrayed eyes wide open shone :  
 Upon his knees he sank, pale as smooth-sculptured stone.

## XXXIV.

Her eyes were open, but she still beheld,  
 Now wide awake, the vision of her sleep :  
 There was a painful change, that nigh expell'd 300  
 The blisses of her dream so pure and deep  
 At which fair Madeline began to weep,  
 And moan forth witless words with many a sigh ;  
 While still her gaze on Porphyro would keep ;  
 Who knelt, with joined hands and piteous eye, 305  
 Fearing to move or speak, she look'd so dreamingly.

## XXXV.

" Ah, Porphyro ! " said she, " but even now  
 Thy voice was at sweet tremble in mine ear,  
 Made tuneable with every sweetest vow ;  
 And those sad eyes were spiritual and clear : 310  
 How chang'd thou art ! how pallid, chill, and drear !  
 Give me that voice again, my Porphyro,  
 Those looks immortal, those complainings dear !  
 Oh leave me not in this eternal woe,  
 For if thou diest, my Love, I know not where to go." 315

## XXXVI.

Beyond a mortal man impassion'd far  
 At these voluptuous accents, he arose,  
 Ethereal, flush'd, and like a throbbing star  
 Seen mid the sapphire heaven's deep repose ;  
 Into her dream he melted, as the rose 320  
 Blendeth its odour with the violet,—  
 Solution sweet : meantime the frost-wind blows  
 Like Love's alarum pattering the sharp sleet  
 Against the window-panes ; St. Agnes' moon hath set.

## XXXVII.

'Tis dark : quick pattereth the flaw-blown sleet : 325  
 " This is no dream, my bride, my Madeline ! "  
 'Tis dark : the iced gusts still rave and beat :  
 " No dream, alas ! alas ! and woe is mine !  
 Porphyro will leave me here to fade and pine.—  
 Cruel ! what traitor could thee hither bring ? 330  
 I curse not, for my heart is lost in thine,  
 Though thou forsakest a deceived thing ;—  
 A dove forlorn and lost with sick unpruned wing."

## XXXVIII.

" My Madeline ! sweet dreamer ! lovely bride !  
 Say, may I be for aye thy vassal blest ? 335  
 Thy beauty's shield, heart-shap'd and vermeil dy'd ?  
 Ah, silver shrine, here will I take my rest  
 After so many hours of toil and quest,  
 A famish'd pilgrim,—sav'd by miracle.  
 Though I have found, I will not rob thy nest 340  
 Saving of thy sweet self ; if thou think'st well  
 To trust, fair Madeline, to no rude infidel.

## XXXIX.

Hark ! 'tis an elfin-storm from faery land,  
 Of haggard seeming, but a boon indeed :  
 Arise—arise ! the morning is at hand ;— 345  
 The bloated wassaillers will never heed :—  
 Let us away, my love, with happy speed ;  
 There are no ears to hear, or eyes to see,—  
 Drown'd all in Rhenish and the sleepy mead :  
 Awake ! arise ! my love, and fearless be, 350  
 For o'er the southern moors I have a home for thee."

## XL.

She hurried at his words, beset with fears,  
 For there were sleeping dragons all around,  
 At glaring watch, perhaps, with ready spears—  
 Down the wide stairs a darkling way they found.— 355  
 In all the house was heard no human sound.  
 A chain-droop'd lamp was flickering by each door ;  
 The arras, rich with horsemen, hawk, and hound,  
 Flutter'd in the besieging wind's uproar ;  
 And the long carpets rose along the gusty floor. 360

## XLI.

They glide, like phantoms, into the wide hall ;  
 Like phantoms, to the iron porch, they glide ;  
 Where lay the Porter, in uneasy sprawl,  
 With a huge empty flaggon by his side :  
 The wakeful bloodhound rose, and shook his hide, 365  
 But his sagacious eye an inmate owns :  
 By one, and one, the bolts full easy slide :—  
 The chains lie silent on the footworn stones ;—  
 The key turns, and the door upon its hinges groans.

## XLII.

And they are gone : aye, ages long ago 370  
 These lovers fled away into the storm.  
 That night the Baron dreamt of many a woe,  
 And all his warrior-guests, with shade and form  
 Of witch, and demon, and large coffin-worm,  
 Were long be-nightmar'd. Angela the old 375  
 Died palsy-twitch'd, with meagre face deform ;  
 The Beadsman, after thousand aves told,  
 For aye unsought for slept among his ashes cold.

# LAMIA.

## PART I.

UPON a time, before the faery broods  
Drove Nymph and Satyr from the prosperous woods,  
Before King Oberon's bright diadem,  
Sceptre, and mantle, clasp'd with dewy gem,  
Frighted away the Dryads and the Fauns 5  
From rushes green, and brakes, and cowslip'd lawns,  
The ever-smitten Hermes empty left  
His golden throne, bent warm on amorous theft :  
From high Olympus had he stolen light,  
On this side of Jove's clouds, to escape the sight 10  
Of his great summoner, and made retreat  
Into a forest on the shores of Crete.  
For somewhere in that sacred island dwelt  
A nymph, to whom all hoofed Satyrs knelt ;  
At whose white feet the languid Tritons poured 15  
Pearls, while on land they wither'd and adored.  
Fast by the springs where she to bathe was wont,  
And in those meads where sometime she might haunt,  
Were strewn rich gifts, unknown to any Muse,  
Though Fancy's casket were unlock'd to choose. 20  
Ah, what a world of love was at her feet !  
So Hermes thought, and a celestial heat  
Burnt from his winged heels to either ear,  
That from a whiteness, as the lily clear,  
Blush'd into roses 'mid his golden hair, 25  
Fallen in jealous curls about his shoulders bare.

From vale to vale, from wood to wood, he flew,  
 Breathing upon the flowers his passion new,  
 And wound with many a river to its head,  
 To find where this sweet nymph prepar'd her secret bed :  
 In vain ; the sweet nymph might nowhere be found,      31  
 And so he rested, on the lonely ground,  
 Pensive, and full of painful jealousies  
 Of the Wood-Gods, and even the very trees.  
 There as he stood, he heard a mournful voice,      35  
 Such as once heard, in gentle heart, destroys  
 All pain but pity : thus the lone voice spake :  
 " When from this wreathed tomb shall I awake !  
 When move in a sweet body fit for life,  
 And love, and pleasure, and the ruddy strife      40  
 Of hearts and lips ! Ah, miserable me ! "  
 The God, dove-footed, glided silently  
 Round bush and tree, soft-brushing, in his speed,  
 The taller grasses and full-flowering weed,  
 Until he found a palpitating snake,      45  
 Bright, and cirque-couchant in a dusky brake.

She was a gordian shape of dazzling hue,  
 Vermillion-spotted, golden, green, and blue ;  
 Strip'd like a zebra, freckled like a pard,  
 Ey'd like a peacock, and all crimson barr'd ;      50  
 And full of silver moons, that, as she breathed,  
 Dissolv'd, or brighter shone, or interwreathed  
 Their lustres with the gloomier tapestries—  
 So rainbow-sided, touch'd with miseries,  
 She seem'd, at once, some penanc'd lady elf,      55  
 Some demon's mistress, or the demon's self.  
 Upon her crest she wore a wannish fire  
 Sprinkled with stars, like Ariadne's tiar :  
 Her head was serpent, but ah, bitter-sweet !  
 She had a woman's mouth with all its pearls complete :      60



And for her eyes : what could such eyes do there  
 But weep, and weep, that they were born so fair ?  
 As Proserpine still weeps for her Silician air.  
 Her throat was serpent, but the words she spake  
 Came, as through bubbling honey, for Love's sake, 65  
 And thus ; while Hermes on his pinions lay,  
 Like a stoop'd falcon ere he takes his prey.

“ Fair Hermes, crown'd with feathers, fluttering light,  
 I had a splendid dream of thee last night :  
 I saw thee sitting, on a throne of gold, 70  
 Among the Gods, upon Olympus old,  
 The only sad one ; for thou didst not hear  
 The soft, lute-finger'd Muses chaunting clear,  
 Nor even Apollo when he sang alone,  
 Deaf to his throbbing throat's long, long melodious moan. 75  
 I dreamt I saw thee, rob'd in purple flakes,  
 Break amorous through the clouds, as morning breaks,  
 And, swiftly as a bright Phoebean dart,  
 Strike for the Cretan isle ; and here thou art !  
 Too gentle Hermes, hast thou found the maid ? ” 80  
 Whereat the star of Lethe not delay'd  
 His rosy eloquence, and thus inquired :  
 “ Thou smooth-lipp'd serpent, surely high inspired !  
 Thou beauteous wreath, with melancholy eyes,  
 Possess whatever bliss thou canst devise, 85  
 Telling me only where my nymph is fled,—  
 Where she doth breathe ! ” “ Bright planet, thou hast  
 said,”  
 Return'd the snake, “ but seal with oaths, fair God ! ”  
 “ I swear,” said Hermes, “ by my serpent rod,  
 And by thine eyes, and by thy starry crown ! ” 90  
 Light flew his earnest words, among the blossoms blown.  
 Then thus again the brilliance feminine :  
 “ Too frail of heart ! for this lost nymph of thine,

Free as the air, invisibly, she strays  
 About these thornless wilds ; her pleasant days 95  
 She tastes unseen ; unseen her nimble feet  
 Leave traces in the grass and flowers sweet ;  
 From weary tendrils, and bow'd branches green,  
 She plucks the fruit unseen, she bathes unseen :  
 And by my power is her beauty veil'd 100  
 To keep it unaffronted, unassail'd  
 By the love-glances of unlovely eyes,  
 Of Satyrs, Fauns, and blear'd Silenus' sights.  
 Pale grew her immortality, for woe  
 Of all these lovers, and she grieved so 105  
 I took compassion on her, bade her steep  
 Her hair in weird syrops, that would keep  
 Her loveliness invisible, yet free  
 To wander as she loves, in liberty.  
 Thou shalt behold her, Hermes, thou alone, 110  
 If thou wilt, as thou swearest, grant my boon ! ”  
 Then, once again, the charmed God began  
 An oath, and through the serpent's ears it ran  
 Warm, tremulous, devout, psalterian.  
 Ravish'd, she lifted her Circean head, 115  
 Blush'd a live damask, and swift-lisping said,  
 “ I was a woman, let me have once more  
 A woman's shape, and charming as before.  
 I love a youth of Corinth—O the bliss !  
 Give me my woman's form, and place me where he is. 120  
 Stoop, Hermes, let me breathe upon thy brow,  
 And thou shalt see thy sweet nymph even now.”  
 The God on half-shut feathers sank serene,  
 She breath'd upon his eyes, and swift was seen  
 Of both the guarded nymph near-smiling on the green. 125  
 It was no dream ; or say a dream it was,  
 Real are the dreams of Gods, and smoothly pass  
 Their pleasures in a long immortal dream.

One warm, flush'd moment, hovering, it might seem  
 Dash'd by the wood-nymph's beauty, so he burn'd ; 130  
 Then, lighting on the printless verdure, turn'd  
 To the swoon'd serpent, and with languid arm,  
 Delicate, put to proof the lythe Caducean charm.  
 So done, upon the nymph his eyes he bent  
 Full of adoring tears and blandishment, 135  
 And towards her stept : she, like a moon in wane,  
 Faded before him, cower'd, nor could restrain  
 Her fearful sobs, self-folding like a flower  
 That faints into itself at evening hour :  
 But the God fostering her chilled hand, 140  
 She felt the warmth, her eyelids open'd bland,  
 And, like new flowers at morning song of bees,  
 Bloom'd, and gave up her honey to the lees.  
 Into the green-recessed woods they flew ;  
 Nor grew they pale, as mortal lovers do. 145

Left to herself, the serpent now began  
 To change ; her elfin blood in madness ran,  
 Her mouth foam'd, and the grass, therewith besprent,  
 Wither'd at dew so sweet and virulent ;  
 Her eyes in torture fix'd, and anguish drear, 150  
 Hot, glaz'd, and wide, with lid-lashes all sear,  
 Flash'd phosphor and sharp sparks, without one cooling tear.  
 The colours all inflam'd throughout her train,  
 She writh'd about, convuls'd with scarlet pain :  
 A deep volcanian yellow took the place 155  
 Of all her milder-mooned body's grace ;  
 And, as the lava ravishes the mead,  
 Spoilt all her silver mail, and golden brede ;  
 Made gloom of all her frecklings, streaks and bars,  
 Eclips'd her crescents, and lick'd up her stars : 160  
 So that, in moments few, she was undrest  
 Of all her sapphires, greens, and amethyst,

And rubious-argent : of all these bereft,  
 Nothing but pain and ugliness were left.  
 Still shone her crown ; that vanish'd, also she 165  
 Melted and disappear'd as suddenly ;  
 And in the air, her new voice luting soft,  
 Cry'd, " Lycius ! gentle Lycius ! "—Borne aloft  
 With the bright mists about the mountains hoar  
 These words dissolv'd : Crete's forests heard no more. 170

Whither fled Lamia, now a lady bright,  
 A full-born beauty new and exquisite ?  
 She fled into that valley they pass o'er  
 Who go to Corinth from Cenchreas' shore ;  
 And rested at the foot of those wild hills, 175  
 The rugged founts of the Peraean rills,  
 And of that other ridge whose barren back  
 Stretches, with all its mist and cloudy rack,  
 South-westward to Cleone. There she stood  
 About a young bird's flutter from a wood, 180  
 Fair, on a sloping green of mossy tread,  
 By a clear pool, wherein she passioned  
 To see herself escap'd from so sore ills,  
 While her robes flaunted with the daffodils.

Ah, happy Lycius !—for she was a maid 185  
 More beautiful than ever twisted braid,  
 Or sigh'd, or blush'd, or on spring-flowered lea  
 Spread a green kirtle to the minstrelsy :  
 A virgin purest lipp'd, yet in the lore  
 Of love deep learned to the red heart's core : 190  
 Not one hour old, yet of sciential brain  
 To unperplex bliss from its neighbour pain ;  
 Define their pettish limits, and estrange  
 Their points of contact, and swift counterchange ;  
 Intrigue with the specious chaos, and dispart 195

Its most ambiguous atoms with sure art ;  
 As though in Cupid's college she had spent  
 Sweet days a lovely graduate, still unshent,  
 And kept his rosy terms in idle languishment.

Why this fair creature chose so faerily 200  
 By the wayside to linger, we shall see ;  
 But first 'tis fit to tell how she could muse  
 And dream, when in the serpent prison-house,  
 Of all she list, strange or magnificent :  
 How, ever, where she will'd, her spirit went ; 205  
 Whether to faint Elysium, or where  
 Down through tress-lifting waves the Nereids fair  
 Wind into Thetis' bower by many a pearly stair ;  
 Or where God Bacchus drains his cups divine,  
 Stretch'd out, at ease, beneath a glutinous pine ; 210  
 Or where in Pluto's gardens palatine  
 Mulciber's columns gleam in far piazzian line.  
 And sometimes into cities she would send  
 Her dream, with feast and rioting to blend ;  
 And once, while among mortals dreaming thus, 215  
 She saw the young Corinthian Lycius  
 Charioting foremost in the envious race,  
 Like a young Jove with calm uneager face,  
 And fell into a swooning love of him.  
 Now on the moth-time of that evening dim 220  
 He would return that way, as well she knew,  
 To Corinth from the shore ; for freshly blew  
 The eastern soft wind, and his galley now  
 Grated the quaystones with her brazen prow  
 In port Cenchreas, from Egina isle 225  
 Fresh anchor'd ; whither he had been awhile  
 To sacrifice to Jove, whose temple there  
 Waits with high marble doors of blood and incense rare.  
 Jove heard his vows, and better'd his desire ;

For by some freakful chance he made retire 230  
From his companions, and set forth to walk,  
Perhaps grown wearied of their Corinth talk :  
Over the solitary hills he fared,  
Thoughtless at first, but ere eve's star appeared  
His phantasy was lost, where reason fades, 235  
In the calm'd twilight of Platonic shades.  
Lamia beheld him coming, near, more near—  
Close to her passing, in indifference drear,  
His silent sandals swept the mossy green ;  
So neighbour'd to him, and yet so unseen 240  
She stood : he pass'd, shut up in mysteries,  
His mind wrapp'd like his mantle, while her eyes  
Follow'd his steps, and her neck regal white  
Turn'd—syllabbling thus, “ Ah, Lycius bright,  
And will you leave me on the hills alone ? 245  
Lycius, look back ! and be some pity shown.”  
He did ; not with cold wonder fearingly,  
But Orpheus-like at an Eurydice ;  
For so delicious were the words she sung,  
It seem'd he had lov'd them a whole summer long : 250  
And soon his eyes had drunk her beauty up,  
Leaving no drop in the bewildering cup,  
And still the cup was full,—while he, afraid  
Lest she should vanish ere his lip had paid  
Due adoration, thus began to adore ; 255  
Her soft look growing coy, she saw his chain so sure :  
“ Leave thee alone ! Look back ! Ah, Goddess, see  
Whether my eyes can ever turn from thee !  
For pity do not this sad heart belie—  
Even as thou vanishest so shall I die. 260  
Stay ! though a Naiad of the rivers, stay !  
To thy far wishes will thy streams obey :  
Stay ! though the greenest woods be thy domain,  
Alone they can drink up the morning rain :

Though a descended Pleiad, will not one 265  
 Of thine harmonious sisters keep in tune  
 Thy spheres, and as thy silver proxy shine ?  
 So sweetly to these ravish'd ears of mine  
 Came thy sweet greeting, that if thou shouldst fade  
 Thy memory will waste me to a shade :— 270  
 For pity do not melt ! ” — “ If I should stay,”  
 Said Lamia, “ here, upon this floor of clay,  
 And pain my steps upon these flowers too rough,  
 What canst thou say or do of charm enough  
 To dull the nice remembrance of my home ? 275  
 Thou canst not ask me with thee here to roam  
 Over these hills and vales, where no joy is,—  
 Empty of immortality and bliss !  
 Thou art a scholar, Lycius, and must know  
 That finer spirits cannot breathe below 280  
 In human climes, and live : Alas ! poor youth,  
 What taste of purer air hast thou to soothe  
 My essence ? What serener palaces,  
 Where I may all my many senses please,  
 And by mysterious sleights a hundred thirsts appease ? 285  
 It cannot be—Adieu ! ” So said, she rose  
 Tiptoe with white arms spread. He, sick to lose  
 The amorous promise of her lone complain,  
 Swoon'd, murmuring of love, and pale with pain.  
 The cruel lady, without any show 290  
 Of sorrow for her tender favourite's woe,  
 But rather, if her eyes could brighter be,  
 With brighter eyes and slow amenity,  
 Put her new lips to his, and gave afresh  
 The life she had so tangled in her mesh : 295  
 And as he from one trance was wakening  
 Into another, she began to sing,  
 Happy in beauty, life, and love, and every thing,  
 A song of love, too sweet for earthly lyres,

While, like held breath, the stars drew in their panting fires.  
 And then she whisper'd in such trembling tone, 301  
 As those who, safe together met alone  
 For the first time through many anguish'd days,  
 Use other speech than looks ; bidding him raise  
 His drooping head, and clear his soul of doubt, 305  
 For that she was a woman, and without  
 Any more subtle fluid in her veins  
 Than throbbing blood, and that the self-same pains  
 Inhabited her frail-strung heart as his.  
 And next she wonder'd how his eyes could miss 310  
 Her face so long in Corinth, where, she said,  
 She dwelt but half retir'd, and there had led  
 Days happy as the gold coin could invent  
 Without the aid of love ; yet in content  
 Till she saw him, as once she pass'd him by, 315  
 Where 'gainst a column he leant thoughtfully  
 At Venus' temple porch, 'mid baskets heap'd  
 Of amorous herbs and flowers, newly reap'd  
 Late on that eve, as 'twas the night before  
 The Adonian feast ; whereof she saw no more, 320  
 But wept alone those days, for why should she adore ?  
 Lycius from death awoke into amaze,  
 To see her still, and singing so sweet lays ;  
 Then from amaze into delight he fell  
 To hear her whisper woman's lore so well ; 325  
 And every word she spake entic'd him on  
 To unperplex'd delight and pleasure known.  
 Let the mad poets say whate'er they please  
 Of the sweets of Faeries, Peris, Goddesses,  
 There is not such a treat among them all, 330  
 Haunters of cavern, lake, and waterfall,  
 As a real woman, lineal indeed  
 From Pyrrha's pebbles or old Adam's seed.  
 Thus gentle Lamia judg'd, and judg'd aright,



That Lycius could not love in half a fright, 335  
So threw the goddess off, and won his heart  
More pleasantly by playing woman's part,  
With no more awe than what her beauty gave,  
That, while it smote, still guaranteed to save.  
Lycius to all made eloquent reply, 340  
Marrying to every word a twinborn sigh ;  
And last, pointing to Corinth, ask'd her sweet,  
If 'twas too far that night for her soft feet.  
The way was short, for Lamia's eagerness  
Made, by a spell, the triple league decrease 345  
To a few paces ; not at all surmised  
By blinded Lycius, so in her comprized.  
They pass'd the city gates, he knew not how,  
So noiseless, and he never thought to know.

As men talk in a dream, so Corinth all, 350  
Throughout her palaces imperial,  
And all her populous streets and temples lewd,  
Mutter'd, like tempest in the distance brew'd,  
To the wide-spreaded night above her towers.  
Men, women, rich and poor, in the cool hours, 355  
Shuffled their sandals o'er the pavement white,  
Companion'd or alone ; while many a light  
Flar'd, here and there, from wealthy festivals,  
And threw their moving shadows on the walls,  
Or found them cluster'd in the cornic'd shade 360  
Of some arch'd temple door, or dusky colonnade.

Muffling his face, of greeting friends in fear,  
Her fingers he press'd hard, as one came near  
With curl'd gray beard, sharp eyes, and smooth bald crown,  
Slow-stepp'd, and rob'd in philosophic gown : 365  
Lycius shrank closer, as they met and past,  
Into his mantle, adding wings to haste,

While hurried Lamia trembled : " Ah," said he,  
 " Why do you shudder love, so ruefully ?  
 Why does your tender palm dissolve in dew ?"— 370  
 " I'm wearied," said fair Lamia : " tell me who  
 Is that old man ? I cannot bring to mind  
 His features :—Lycius ! wherefore did you blind  
 Yourself from his quick eyes ? " Lycius reply'd,  
 " 'Tis Apollonius sage, my trusty guide 375  
 And good instructor ; but to-night he seems  
 The ghost of folly haunting my sweet dreams."

While yet he spake they had arriv'd before  
 A pillar'd porch, with lofty portal door,  
 Where hung a silver lamp, whose phosphor glow 380  
 Reflected in the slabbed steps below,  
 Mild as a star in water ; for so new,  
 And so unsully'd was the marble's hue,  
 So through the crystal polish, liquid fine,  
 Ran the dark veins, that none but feet divine 385  
 Could e'er have touch'd there. Sounds Aeolian  
 Breath'd from the hinges, as the ample span  
 Of the wide doors disclos'd a place unknown  
 Some time to any, but those two alone,  
 And a few Persian mutes, who that same year 390  
 Were seen about the markets : none knew where  
 They could inhabit ; the most curious  
 Were foil'd, who watch'd to trace them to their house :  
 And but the flitter-winged verse must tell,  
 For truth's sake, what woe afterwards befel, 395  
 'Twould humour many a heart to leave them thus,  
 Shut from the busy world of more incredulous.

## PART II.

LOVE in a hut, with water and a crust,  
Is—Love, forgive us !—cinders, ashes, dust ;  
Love in a palace is perhaps at last  
More grievous torment than a hermit's fast :—  
That is a doubtful tale from faery land, 5  
Hard for the non-elect to understand.  
Had Lycius liv'd to hand his story down,  
He might have given the moral a fresh frown,  
Or clench'd it quite : but too short was their bliss  
To breed distrust and hate, that make the soft voice hiss. 10  
Besides, there, nightly, with terrific glare,  
Love, jealous grown of so complete a pair,  
Hover'd and buzz'd his wings, with fearful roar,  
Above the lintel of their chamber door,  
And down the passage cast a glow upon the floor. 15

For all this came a ruin : side by side  
They were enthroned, in the even tide,  
Upon a couch, near to a curtaining  
Whose airy texture, from a golden string,  
Floated into the room, and let appear 20  
Unveil'd the summer heaven, blue and clear,  
Betwixt two marble shafts :—there they reposed,  
Where use had made it sweet, with eyelids closed,  
Saving a tythe which love still open kept,  
That they might see each other while they almost slept ; 25  
When from the slope side of a suburb hill,  
Deafening the swallow's twitter, came a thrill  
Of trumpets—Lycius startled—the sounds fled,

But left a thought, a buzzing in his head.  
 For the first time, since first he harbour'd in 30  
 That purple-lined palace of sweet sin,  
 His spirit pass'd beyond its golden bourn  
 Into the noisy world almost forsworn.  
 The lady, ever watchful, penetrant,  
 Saw this with pain, so arguing a want 35  
 Of something more, more than her empery  
 Of joys ; and she began to moan and sigh  
 Because he mus'd beyond her, knowing well  
 That but a moment's thought is passion's passing bell.  
 " Why do you sigh, fair creature ? " whisper'd he : 40  
 " Why do you think ? " return'd she tenderly :  
 " You have deserted me ;—where am I now ?  
 " Not in your heart while care weighs on your brow :  
 No, no, you have dismiss'd me ; and I go  
 From your breast houseless : aye, it must be so." 45  
 He answer'd, bending to her open eyes,  
 Where he was mirror'd small in paradise,  
 " My silver planet, both of eve and morn !  
 Why will you plead yourself so sad forlorn,  
 While I am striving how to fill my heart 50  
 With deeper crimson, and a double smart ?  
 How to entangle, trammel up and snare  
 Your soul in mine, and labyrinth you there  
 Like the hid scent in an unbudded rose ?  
 Aye, a sweet kiss—you see your mighty woes. 55  
 My thoughts ! shall I unveil them ? Listen then !  
 What mortal hath a prize, that other men  
 May be confounded and abash'd withal,  
 But lets it sometimes pace abroad majestic, 60  
 And triumph, as in thee I should rejoice  
 Amid the hoarse alarm of Corinth's voice.  
 Let my foes choke, and my friends shout afar,  
 While through the thronged streets your bridal car

Wheels round its dazzling spokes."—The lady's cheek  
 Trembled ; she nothing said, but, pale and meek, 65  
 Arose and knelt before him, wept a rain  
 Of sorrows at his words ; at last with pain  
 Beseeching him, the while his hand she wrung,  
 To change his purpose. He thereat was stung,  
 Perverse, with stronger fancy to reclaim 70  
 Her wild and timid nature to his aim :  
 Besides, for all his love, in self despite,  
 Against his better self, he took delight  
 Luxurious in her sorrows, soft and new.  
 His passion, cruel grown, took on a hue 75  
 Fierce and sanguineous as 'twas possible  
 In one whose brow had no dark veins to swell.  
 Fine was the mitigated fury, like  
 Apollo's presence when in act to strike  
 The serpent—Ha, the serpent ! certes, she 80  
 Was none. She burnt, she lov'd the tyranny,  
 And, all subdu'd, consented to the hour  
 When to the bridal he should lead his paramour.  
 Whispering in midnight silence, said the youth,  
 " Sure some sweet name thou hast, though, by my truth, 85  
 I have not ask'd it, ever thinking thee  
 Not mortal, but of heavenly progeny,  
 As still I do. Hast any mortal name,  
 Fit appellation for this dazzling frame ?  
 Or friends or kinsfolk on the cited earth, 90  
 To share our marriage feast and nuptial mirth ? "  
 " I have no friends," said Lamia, " no, not one ;  
 My presence in wide Corinth hardly known :  
 My parents' bones are in their dusty urns  
 Sepulchred, where no kindled incense burns, 95  
 Seeing all their luckless race are dead, save me,  
 And I neglect the holy rite for thee.  
 Even as you list invite your many guests ;

But if, as now it seems, your vision rests  
With any pleasure on me, do not bid 100  
Old Apollonius—from him keep me hid.”  
Lycius, perplex'd at words so blind and blank,  
Made close inquiry ; from whose touch she shrank,  
Feigning a sleep ; and he to the dull shade  
Of deep sleep in a moment was betray'd. 105

It was the custom then to bring away  
The bride from home at blushing shut of day,  
Veil'd, in a chariot, heralded along  
By strewn flowers, torches, and a marriage song,  
With other pageants : but this fair unknown 110  
Had not a friend. So being left alone,  
(Lycius was gone to summon all his kin)  
And knowing surely she could never win  
His foolish heart from its mad pompousness,  
She set herself, high-thoughted, how to dress 115  
The misery in fit magnificence.  
She did so, but 'tis doubtful how and whence  
Came, and who were her subtle servitors.  
About the halls, and to and from the doors,  
There was a noise of wings, till in short space 120  
The glowing banquet-room shone with wide-arched grace.  
A haunting music, sole perhaps and lone  
Supportress of the faery-roof, made moan  
Throughout, as fearful the whole charm might fade.  
Fresh carved cedar, mimicking a glade 125  
Of palm and plantain, met from either side,  
High in the midst, in honor of the bride :  
Two palms and then two plantains, and so on,  
From either side their stems branch'd one to one  
All down the aisled place ; and beneath all 130  
There ran a stream of lamps straight on from wall to wall.  
So canopy'd, lay an untasted feast

Teeming with odours. Lamia, regal drest,  
 Silently pac'd about, and as she went,  
 In pale contented sort of discontent, 135  
 Mission'd her viewless servants to enrich  
 The fretted splendour of each nook and niche.  
 Between the tree-stems, marbled plain at first,  
 Came jasper pannels ; then, anon, there burst  
 Forth creeping imagery of slighter trees, 140  
 And with the large wove in small intricacies.  
 Approving all, she faded at self-will,  
 And shut the chamber up, close, hush'd and still,  
 Complete and ready for the revels rude,  
 When dreadful guests would come to spoil her solitude. 145

The day appear'd, and all the gossip rout.  
 O senseless Lycius ! Madman ! wherefore flout  
 The silent-blessing fate, warm cloister'd hours,  
 And show to common eyes these secret bowers ?  
 The herd approach'd ; each guest, with busy brain, 150  
 Arriving at the portal, gaz'd amain,  
 And enter'd marveling : for they knew the street,  
 Remember'd it from childhood all complete  
 Without a gap, yet ne'er before had seen  
 That royal porch, that high-built fair demesne ; 155  
 So in they hurried all, maz'd, curious and keen :  
 Save one, who look'd thereon with eye severe,  
 And with calm-planted steps walk'd in austere ;  
 'Twas Apollonius : something too he laugh'd,  
 As though some knotty problem, that had daft 160  
 His patient thought, had now begun to thaw,  
 And solve and melt :—'twas just as he foresaw.

He met within the murmurous vestibule  
 His young disciple. " 'Tis no common rule,  
 Lycius," said he, " for uninvited guest 165

To force himself upon you, and infest  
 With an unbidden presence the bright throng  
 Of younger friends ; yet must I do this wrong,  
 And you forgive me." Lycius blush'd, and led  
 The old man through the inner doors broad-spread ; 170  
 With reconciling words and courteous mien  
 Turning into sweet milk the sophist's spleen.

Of wealthy lustre was the banquet-room,  
 Fill'd with pervading brilliance and perfume :  
 Before each lucid pannel fuming stood 175  
 A censer fed with myrrh and spiced wood,  
 Each by a sacred tripod held aloft,  
 Whose slender feet wide-swerv'd upon the soft  
 Wool-woofed carpets : fifty wreaths of smoke  
 From fifty censers their light voyage took 180  
 To the high roof, still mimick'd as they rose  
 Along the mirror'd walls by twin-clouds odourous.  
 Twelve sphered tables, by silk seats inspher'd,  
 High as the level of a man's breast rear'd  
 On libbard's paws, upheld the heavy gold 185  
 Of cups and goblets, and the store thrice told  
 Of Ceres' horn, and, in huge vessels, wine  
 Come from the gloomy tun with merry shine.  
 Thus loaded with a feast the tables stood,  
 Each shrining in the midst the image of a God. 190

When in an antichamber every guest  
 Had felt the cold full sponge to pleasure press'd,  
 By minist'ring slaves, upon his hands and feet,  
 And fragrant oils with ceremony meet  
 Pour'd on his hair, they all mov'd to the feast 195  
 In white robes, and themselves in order plac'd  
 Around the silken couches, wondering  
 Whence all this mighty cost and blaze of wealth could spring.



Soft went the music the soft air along,  
 While fluent Greek a vowel'd undersong 200  
 Kept up among the guests, discoursing low  
 At first, for scarcely was the wine at flow ;  
 But when the happy vintage touch'd their brains,  
 Louder they talk, and louder come the strains  
 Of powerful instruments :—the gorgeous dyes 205  
 The space, the splendour of the draperies,  
 The roof of awful richness, nectarous cheer,  
 Beautiful slaves, and Lamia's self, appear,  
 Now, when the wine has done its rosy deed,  
 And every soul from human trammels freed, 210  
 No more so strange ; for merry wine, sweet wine,  
 Will make Elysian shade not too fair, too divine.  
 Soon was God Bacchus at meridian height ;  
 Flush'd were their cheeks, and bright eyes double bright :  
 Garlands of every green, and every scent 215  
 From vales deflower'd, or forest-trees branch-rent,  
 In baskets of bright osier'd gold were brought  
 High as the handles heap'd, to suit the thought  
 Of every guest ; that each, as he did please,  
 Might fancy-fit his brows, silk-pillow'd at his ease. 220

What wreath for Lamia ? What for Lycius ?  
 What for the sage, old Apollonius ?  
 Upon her aching forehead be there hung  
 The leaves of willow and of adder's tongue ;  
 And for the youth, quick, let us strip for him 225  
 The thyrsus, that his watching eyes may swim  
 Into forgetfulness ; and, for the sage,  
 Let spear-grass and the spiteful thistle wage  
 War on his temples. Do not all charms fly  
 At the mere touch of cold philosophy ? 230  
 There was an awful rainbow once in heaven :  
 We know her woof, her texture ; she is given

In the dull catalogue of common things.  
 Philosophy will clip an Angel's wings,  
 Conquer all mysteries by rule and line, 235  
 Empty the haunted air, and gnomed mine—  
 Unweave a rainbow, as it erewhile made  
 The tender-person'd Lamia melt into a shade.

By her glad Lycius sitting, in chief place,  
 Scarce saw in all the room another face, 240  
 Till, checking his love trance, a cup he took  
 Full brimm'd, and opposite sent forth a look  
 'Cross the broad table, to beseech a glance  
 From his old teacher's wrinkled countenance,  
 And pledged him. The bald-head philosopher 245  
 Had fix'd his eye, without a twinkle or stir  
 Full on the alarmed beauty of the bride,  
 Brow-beating her fair form, and troubling her sweet pride.  
 Lycius then press'd her hand, with devout touch,  
 As pale it lay upon the rosy couch : 250  
 'Twas icy, and the cold ran through his veins ;  
 Then sudden it grew hot, and all the pains  
 Of an unnatural heat shot to his heart.  
 " Lamia, what means this ? Wherefore dost thou start ?  
 Know'st thou that man ? " Poor Lamia answer'd not.  
 He gaz'd into her eyes, and not a jot 256  
 Own'd they the lovelorn piteous appeal :  
 More, more he gaz'd : his human senses reel :  
 Some hungry spell that loveliness absorbs ;  
 There was no recognition in those orbs. 260  
 " Lamia ! " he cry'd—and no soft-ton'd reply.  
 The many heard, and the loud revelry  
 Grew hush ; the stately music no more breathes ;  
 The myrtle sicken'd in a thousand wreaths.  
 By faint degrees, voice, lute, and pleasure ceased ; 265  
 A deadly silence step by step increased,

Until it seem'd a horrid presence there,  
 And not a man but felt the terror in his hair.  
 " Lamia ! " he shriek'd ; and nothing but the shriek  
 With its sad echo did the silence break. 270  
 " Begone, foul dream ! " he cry'd, gazing again  
 In the bride's face, where now no azure vein  
 Wander'd on fair-spac'd temples ; no soft bloom  
 Misted the cheek ; no passion to illumine  
 The deep-recessed vision :—all was blight ; 275  
 Lamia, no longer fair, there sat a deadly white.  
 " Shut, shut those juggling eyes, thou ruthless man !  
 Turn them aside, wretch ! or the righteous ban  
 Of all the Gods, whose dreadful images  
 Here represent their shadowy presences, 280  
 May pierce them on the sudden with the thorn  
 Of painful blindness ; leaving thee forlorn,  
 In trembling dotage to the feeblest fright  
 Of conscience, for their long offended might,  
 For all thine impious proud-heart sophistries, 285  
 Unlawful magic, and enticing lies.  
 Corinthians ! look upon that gray-beard wretch !  
 Mark how, possess'd, his lashless eyelids stretch  
 Around his demon eyes ! Corinthians, see !  
 My sweet bride withers at their potency." 290  
 " Fool ! " said the sophist, in an under-tone  
 Gruff with contempt ; which a death-nighning moan  
 From Lycius answer'd, as heart-struck and lost,  
 He sank supine beside the aching ghost.  
 " Fool ! Fool ! " repeated he, while his eyes still 295  
 Relented not, nor mov'd ; " from every ill  
 Of life have I preserv'd thee to this day,  
 And shall I see thee made a serpent's prey ? "  
 Then Lamia breath'd death breath ; the sophist's eye,  
 Like a sharp spear, went through her utterly, 300  
 Keen, cruel, perçant, stinging : she, as well

As her weak hand could any meaning tell,  
Motion'd him to be silent ; vainly so,  
He look'd and look'd again a level—No !  
“ A serpent ! ” echoed he ; no sooner said, 305  
Than with a frightful scream she vanished :  
And Lycius' arms were empty of delight,  
As were his limbs of life, from that same night.  
On the high couch he lay !—his friends came round—  
Supported him—no pulse, or breath they found, 310  
And, in its marriage robe, the heavy body wound.

## NOTES.

---

### ISABELLA.

*Isabella* was intended for inclusion in a collection of tales from Boccaccio\* to be versified by Keats's friend Reynolds, but Reynolds thought it too good to publish with the only two attempts he himself found time to complete. The poem was begun in February 1818 and finished before the end of April. It follows its source (*Decameron*, Day iv. Novel 5) closely as to facts, merely giving *Isabella* two brothers instead of three, providing the brothers with a mercenary motive for the murder, and transferring the scene of the story from Messina to Florence; but Keats's treatment of the story is completely original.

The metre is the *ottava rima*, a favourite with Italian writers, used frequently by the Elizabethan poets and resuscitated about this time, notably by Lord Byron, who, however, used it for humorous purposes: it consists of eight iambic pentameters, rhyming *ab ab ab cc*. Keats manages his metre skilfully, avoiding monotony by change of pause rather than by variation of accent: apart from the frequent substitution of a trochee (*e.g. Gréw, like*) for the iamb in the first foot, there is little departure from strict regularity—l. 62, where there is an extra short syllable, *bý ūnwēlcōme*—is an exception.

But the great beauty of the poem undoubtedly lies not in the metre but in the narrative and the diction. The story is told simply and directly, and our sympathy is enlisted throughout—indeed, one captious critic, ignoring the distinction between a classic and a romantic poet, has complained that Keats occasionally in his sympathy with his heroine appeals to us in his own person instead of leaving the plain tale to have its own effect. The insight into character and feeling shown is indeed remarkable for so young a poet; apart from the realistic detail of the first three stanzas—in which the youth of the poet was probably an advantage—stanzas xlv. and xlvii. have been particularly praised, while the insane laughter of the distraught girl (stanza lxii.) adds a graphic and unexpected touch of horror and realism combined.

---

\* Giovanni Boccaccio (1313-75) was the author of the great Italian collection of tales, the *Decameron*.

Here, too, though perhaps not so much as in *Hyperion* and *The Eve of St. Agnes*, Keats's wonderful picture-making power is evident : see, for instance, ll. 199-200, 213-15, 239, 298-304—Keats has imagined his characters and their surroundings so vividly that with his mind's eye he can see them more clearly and in greater detail than the common man can see objects which have a material existence.

The diction, again, though there are not quite so many magic phrases as in some other of his poems, has "every rift loaded with ore." Except for a very few prosaic colloquialisms which are the legacy of Leigh Hunt, and the repeated invocation of Melancholy, Music, and Melpomene in stanzas lv., lvi., and lxi., which, though beautiful in itself, is a thought too artificial for the simple tragedy of the theme, there is hardly a phrase which could be improved. Especially noteworthy is the lovely effect of the repetition in stanzas xi. and liii. and the concentrated poetry of such phrases as *lazar stairs* (l. 124), *torched mines* (l. 108), *Cut Mercy with a sharp knife to the bone* (l. 174), *Hope's accursed bands* (l. 230).

2. *palmer* : a pilgrim to the Holy Land who carried a palm-branch as a memento of his pilgrimage ; Lorenzo is a pilgrim to the Holy Land of love.

16. *She . . . same* : *i.e.* by inattentive stitching as she uttered his name.

21. *vespers* : "evening prayers."

32. *honeyless days* : "days without the sweetness of acknowledged love."

33. *untouch'd* : *i.e.* unkissed.

34. *within . . . domain* : "where it should have been rosy."

36. *cool* : a more poetical because a more exact and vivid word than the usual *soothe*.

39. *If looks . . . tears* : "if her looks mean that she loves me, I will dry her tears."

44. *ruddy tide* : *i.e.* of his blood which throbbed so fiercely (*puls'd*) that his decision melted and he could not speak.

46. *conceit* : "thought, imagination."

62. *fear* : "affright."

64. *shrive* : "confess."

70. *poesied . . . rhyme* : "made poetry by kissing hers," the two pair of lips corresponding to the two rhymes.

78. *honey'd dart* : Cupid, the god of love, is always represented as armed with bow and arrows, the wounds from which cause love.

88. *pleasure* : "find pleasure."

94. *in bright gold . . . read* : *i.e.* should be considered happy.

95. *Theseus' spouse* : Ariadne, daughter of Minos, who fell in love

with Theseus when he was sent to carry the tribute of the Athenians to a monster called the Minotaur, who lived in a labyrinth. She helped him to kill the monster and escape, and then fled with him; he, however, deserted her on the island of Naxos. Tales of desertion, Keats implies, are truly sad, but most sorrowing lovers are really happy.

97. for . . . award : "as regards the usual upshot."

99. Dido : Dido, the Queen of Carthage, deserted by Aeneas, killed herself.

101-2. though . . . embalm'd : a reference to the fashion in which Lorenzo was buried, without coffin, shroud, or ceremony.

103. almsmen of spring bowers : "those who beg their living from the flowers of spring."

107. swelt : "toil, swelter."

108. torched : "lighted by torches."

109. quiver'd : "now quivering" : another suggestion is *once proud-quiver'd*—"once proudly bearing a quiver full of arrows."

112. rich-or'd . . . flood : "the gold washed down by the river."

113. Ceylon diver : *i.e.* the diver for pearls : the accent is on the first syllable of *Ceylon*, as in a passage of Dryden's *Annus Mirabilis*, which probably suggested some phrases in these lines.

124. lazar stairs : *i.e.* stairs on which lepers lay asking alms, the allusion being to the story of the Rich Man and Lazarus (St. Luke, xvi. 19-31, especially verse 20).

125-6. Because . . . years : "because they took more pleasure in their account-books ruled with red lines than in old Greek poems?"

127-8. Why . . . proud : this absurd and feeble repetition is one of the few weak passages in the poem.

131-2. that land . . . beggar-spies : probably a reference to the Holy Land. pal'd : "fenced."

133-6. hawks . . . Malay : the brothers were ready to swoop like hawks upon the forest of masts, *i.e.* upon trading-vessels. They bore as easily as mules a load of money and the lies needed to gain it, snatched as quick as cat's paws at any unwary and open-hearted victim, and were fluent in the foreign languages most useful for commerce.

140. Hot Egypt's pest : probably "all the plagues of Egypt," with reference to Exodus vii.-xi.

146. forgiving boon : "the boon of forgiveness."

147. thy spicy myrtles : a reference to the Italian scenery in which Boccaccio lived.

150. gittern : gittern or cittern, an instrument like a guitar; Keats took the word from Chaucer.

155. assail : "attempt"; Keats uses the verb as a noun.

159. *stead thee* : "benefit thee."

163. *unconfines* : "releases, discloses."

168. *To some . . . noble* : *i.e.* "to wed some great noble."

174. *Cut . . . bone* : "destroyed mercy, became merciless" : the metaphor is very vivid and peculiarly appropriate when applied to murderers.

183. *speculation* : "meditation."

184. *while . . . skies* : "before the day grows hot."

187-8. *ere the hot sun . . . eglantine* : "before the sun has dried up one of the drops of dew on the dog-rose, as if he were telling the beads of his rosary one by one."

189. *was wont* : "was accustomed to do."

195. *matin-song* : "morning song."

203. *fain* : strictly "glad," but here rather "hard put to it."

207. *Goodbye . . . back* : a feeble colloquialism which shows the influence of Leigh Hunt.

209. *their murder'd man* : rightly the most famous phrase in the poem.

211. *straiten'd* : "narrowed."

243. *single* : "with undivided love and allegiance."

246. *higher . . . zest* : *i.e.* passion and sorrow.

259. *dungeon climes* : "foreign countries which served as a prison to keep him from her."

262. *like . . . vale* : a reference to II. Chronicles, xxviii. 3 ; the smoke recalled to Ahaz his murder of his children.

268. *from . . . pall* : *i.e.* from death.

270. *from his cloudy hall* : "from the dim other-world of his belief to which he has almost gone," *i.e.* from death.

278. *lute* : *i.e.* notes soft like those of the lute.

279. *lorn* : "lost." *loamed* : "stopped with earth."

312. *in Humanity* : "because still forming part of humanity, still alive."

322. *left the atom darkness . . . turmoil* : "left the darkness, all composed of tiny particles, slowly whirling." Keats is probably thinking of the theory that everything is composed of atoms, a theory put forward in the *De Rerum Natura* of Lucretius (95 B.C.-52 B.C.).

325. *pillowy cleft* : "hollow in the pillow" : Keats himself in his illness often experienced such nights of wretchedness.

334. *school'd my infancy* : "taught me, who was inexperienced as a child."

339. *the clay* : *i.e.* the corpse.



347. *champaign* : "field."

352. *The flint . . . head* : see ll. 298-9.

370. *Her silk . . . phantasies* : "she had embroidered fanciful patterns in purple silk."

380. *locks of hoar* : "grey hair"; a peculiar use of *hoar* as a noun.

384. *And . . . rave* : an unexpectedly weak line, clearly due to the necessity of rhyming with *grave*.

385. *wormy circumstance* : "details of the grave."

388. *plaining* : "complaining, mourning."

393. *Persean sword* : the sword of Perseus, who cut off the head of Medusa, the gorgon, a monstrous maiden with serpents for hair, the sight of whose face turned the beholder to stone.

398. *love impersonate* : "love incarnate in human form," *i.e.* Lorenzo.

412. *serpent-pipe* : "pipe twisted like a serpent."

427. *its peers . . . tufts* : "the other plants of Basil." *peers* : "equals."

432. *leafits* : "leaflets"; the form was used by Coleridge in the first edition of his *Nightingale*.

436. *Lethean* : "forgotten"; the waters of the river Lethe in the underworld gave oblivion.

439. *cypress* : the cypress is symbolical of grief.

442. *Melpomene* : one of the nine Muses; she presided over tragedy.

451. *Baälites of pelf* : worshippers of the Baal of money. Baal was the chief male divinity of the Phoenicians, and was also worshipped by the Canaanites. He appears to have been a sun-god.

453. *elf* : "person," simply.

465. *sift* : "examine closely."

467. *chapel-shrift* : "confession."

477. *guerdon* : "reward."

485. *Well-a-way* : "alas!", from the Old English *wà là wà*, *i.e.* woe, lo! woe.

493. *the Pilgrim* : *i.e.* any passing pilgrim.

## THE EVE OF ST. AGNES.

*The Eve of St. Agnes* was written in 1819 ; it was begun in January, and it is pleasant to imagine that the date may have been St. Agnes' Eve itself—the 20th. The story is of Keats's own invention, founded upon the superstitions connected with the day : like many of our best narratives it has a very simple plot, so simple that the common man would think it incapable of arousing interest. But in Keats's hands it has become one of the most entrancing of English verse tales.

The narrative itself is well-sustained—there is no irrelevance, no digression, no intricate side-plot ; but these are negative virtues : in themselves they would not give the poem its fascination. What really attracts us is the series of wonderful pictures and fine phrases, the skilful contrast—in a word, the glamorous appeal to the eye and the ear. First we have a striking description of the cold and silent night, a study in black and frosty white : from this we pass to the “chambers ready with their pride,” full of light and colour, sound and warmth, and then again to the quiet of Madeline's room. Where all is beautiful it is hard to pick out beauties, but the descriptions of the “carved angels” (stanza iv.), of Madeline in the glow of the moonlighted windows (stanzas xxiv. and xxv.), of Madeline asleep “in lap of legends old” perhaps linger in our memories more vividly than any others. The poem has all the brightness of a mediaeval illuminated manuscript, all the old-world charm of Spenser, whose stanza Keats has here used.

5. **Beadsman** : a man who prayed for the soul of others ; generally, as here, an almsman praying for the soul of his benefactor.

12. **meagre, barefoot, wan** : Keats uses elsewhere similar sets of three adjectives placed side by side so as to give cumulative effect ; he probably learnt the device from Chatterton, the boy-poet (1752-70).

15. **black purgatorial rails** : the rails are regarded as cramping in the effigies, thus inflicting the pains of purgatory : as Leigh Hunt pointed out, the idea is reminiscent of a passage in the *Purgatorio* of the great Italian poet Dante (1265-1321), which Keats had read in translation : he adds “the very colour of the rails is made to . . . shadow forth the gloom of the punishment.”

16. *dumb orat'ries* : *dumb* is a transferred epithet ; in meaning, it is applicable only to *knights, ladies*.

21. *Flatter'd to tears* : the music moved the old man to tears of hope and self-pity ; he flattered himself that a brighter fate would now be his lot.

26. *for his soul's reprieve* : " to save his soul from future torment."

29. *And . . . fro* : " and he happened to hear it because many a door was open in consequence of the hurried coming and going."

49. *honey'd* : " sweet," a favourite word with Keats.

51. *As* : " for instance."

52. *couch supine* : " lay flat."

53. *require* : " ask."

54. After this line the manuscript in the British Museum has another stanza to the effect that the lover would bring delicious food and soft music—thus accounting for Porphyrio's otherwise meaningless behaviour later in providing food which Madeline was not expected to eat.

61. *not . . . saw not* : " not because his ardour was frozen by a disdainful glance from Madeline but because she did not see him."

64. *regardless* : " unseeing."

70. *Hoodwink'd . . . fancy* : *i.e.* cheated of a sense of her surroundings by her imagination, that "deceiving elf." *amort* : " dead to all around."

71. *St. Agnes . . . unshorn* : the name Agnes being connected with the Latin *agnus*, " a lamb," two lambs were brought to Mass on St. Agnes' day and offered during the chanting of the *Agnus Dei* (" O Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of the world," etc.). Their wool was afterwards clipped and woven by the nuns. See ll. 115-18.

77. *Buttress'd from moonlight* : *i.e.* protected by a buttress from the moonlight, which would have disclosed his presence.

84. *his heart . . . citadel* : " his heart in which, as in a fortress, love feverishly keeps guard."

90. *beldame* : literally, *fair dame* ; but used only of old hags.

105. *gossip* : " friend," literally " one related in God, *i.e.* by baptism ; a sponsor."

120. *hold . . . sieve* : witches were credited with the ability to make a sieve non-porous : cp. *Macbeth*, I. iii. 8, " But in a sieve I'll thither sail."

124-5. *my lady . . . deceive* : *i.e.* this very night Madeline is trying to conjure up a vision ; may the good angels send her a dream which she may mistake for a miracle.

126. *mickle* : " much."

127. *moon* : *i.e.* " moonlight," the moon being personified so as to admit of the beautiful epithet *languid*.

133. brook : "check, restrain," a misuse of the word, which means *use, enjoy, or endure*.

155. churchyard thing : "creature only fit to be buried."

158. plaining : "complaining, lamenting."

165. closet : "cupboard."

168. While . . . coverlet : "while in her dreams she saw legions of fairies walking upon her bed."

171. Since . . . debt : Merlin was the son of a demon and consequently had to return to hell, Vivian working upon him one of his own spells.

173. cates : "dainties, delicacies"; cp. *catering*.

174. tambour frame : "embroidery frame."

185. From . . . espial : "from fear that Porphyro might be spied in the half-dark."

192. St. Agnes' charmed maid : "a maid working St. Agnes's charms."

193. mission'd : "sent upon a mission."

198. fray'd : "frightened."

204. But . . . voluble : *i.e.* but her heart, beating quickly, told her heart (*i.e.* told her) how agitated she was.

213. deep-damask'd : "richly embroidered."

215. emblazonings : "heraldic decorations."

216. scutcheon : "a shield on which the heraldic arms of a family are emblazoned."

218. gules : the heraldic term for *red*.

237. poppied : poppies, since they contain opium, are an emblem of sleep.

238. soul fatigued away : the soul is conceived as leaving the body during sleep.

241. Clasp'd . . . pray : *i.e.* clasped closely and lovingly, since a missal or prayer-book would be doubly precious in a pagan land. swart Paynims : "dark pagans."

246-7. if it . . . tenderness : *i.e.* to hear when her breathing took the slow regularity which showed she was asleep.

253. faded moon : *i.e.* setting moon.

257. Morphean amulet : "charm to give sleep" so that the noise should not wake Madeline before the table was prepared : Morpheus was the god of sleep.

266. soother : "more soothing."

267. lucent : "reflecting or giving out light." tinct : "coloured."

277. eremite : "hermit."

286. redeem : "bring back"; it seemed as if he could never break the spell which kept Madeline asleep.

288. So . . . phantasies : "so he mused for a time, caught in a web of fancies." woofed : "woven."

292. La belle dame sans mercy : "the merciless fair lady"; the reference shows Keats's preoccupation with the subject which he was later to treat in his own fine poem with this title : the mediaeval poem extant with this title is an unpoetic and monotonous dialogue between a lover and his disdainful mistress. It was in Provence that the famous mediaeval school of love-poetry had its origin.

296. affrayed : "frightened."

322. Solution : "intermingling."

325. flaw-blown : "wind-blown"; a flaw is a gust of wind.

333. unpruned : "ruffled, untrimmed."

336. heart . . . dy'd : heart-shaped because his heart is hers, and flushed with love.

344. haggard seeming : "wretched appearance"; the adjective *haggard* is one of Keats's strikingly poetic epithets.

346. bloated wassailers : this and the following stanzas probably contain reminiscences of *Hamlet* and *Macbeth*—the fondness of the "bloat king" Claudius for "Rhenish" in the first play and the drunken Porter in the second.

349. Rhenish : *i.e.* Rhenish wine.

353. sleeping dragons : *i.e.* her kinsmen, the foes of Porphyro.

357. chain-droop'd : "hanging from a chain."

358. arras : "tapestry."

366. his . . . owns : "his wise eye recognises Madeline as a member of the household," so that he makes no sound.

377. aves : prayers in honour of the Virgin Mary—"Ave Maria, gratia plena."—"Hail, Mary ! full of grace."

## LAMIA.

*Lamia*, written in 1819, was the last long poem which Keats finished and published : it shows Keats at his best in sheer narrative power. Before writing the poem, he made a careful study of the work of Dryden, and he here uses the heroic couplet first perfected by that poet. Like Dryden, he varies his metre by the use of alexandrines (lines with six iambic feet instead of five) ; like Dryden he gains a force and sweep of rhythm and an easy stride of narrative by shifting the pause in the line and by a skilful mixture of lines which end with the sense and "run-on lines," where the sense is carried on to the next line : such a couplet, for instance as :

"For somewhere in that sacred island dwelt  
A nymph, to whom all hoofed satyrs knelt"

might have been written by Dryden himself except for the "picture-word" *hoofed*.

The source of his story Keats gave himself in a footnote to his poem :—

"Philostratus, in his fourth book *de Vita Apollonii*, hath a memorable instance of this kind, which I may not omit, of one Menippus Lycius, a young man twenty-five years of age, that going betwixt Cenchreas and Corinth, met such a phantasm in the habit of a fair gentlewoman, which taking him by the hand, carried him home to her house, in the suburbs of Corinth, and told him she was a Phoenician by birth, and if he would tarry with her, he should hear her sing and play, and drink such wine as never any drank, and no man should molest him ; but she, being fair and lovely, would live and die with him, that was fair and lovely to behold. The young man, a philosopher, otherwise staid and discreet, able to moderate his passions, though not this of love, tarried with her a while to his great content, and at last married her, to whose wedding, amongst other guests, came Apollonius ; who, by some probable conjectures, found her out to be a serpent, a lamia ; and that all her furniture was, like Tantalus' gold, described by Homer, no substance but mere illusions. When she saw herself descried, she wept, and desired Apollonius to be silent, but he would not be moved, and thereupon she, plate, house, and all that was in it, vanished in an instant :

many thousands took notice of this fact, for it was done in the midst of Greece."

Burton's "Anatomy of Melancholy." *Part 3. Sect. 2.*  
*Memb. 1. Subs. 1.*

And it is interesting to see how much the poetic imagination can make of the merest hint. "All her furniture was, like Tantalus' gold . . . no substance, but mere illusions," for instance, provides all Keats's "authority" for ll. 379-93 of Part I., and ll. 117-41 and 173-208 of Part II., perhaps the most splendid passages in the poem.

But it is not merely these luxurious beauties that appeal to us; not merely the incidental nature-touches such as "About a young bird's flutter from a wood"; it is Lamia herself and her piteous fate. By all the laws of morality we ought to rejoice at the youth's escape from the serpent-woman, but Keats enlists all our sympathy on behalf of the two lovers. Even illusion, he seems to say, is better than hard fact, if only it is beautiful. Perhaps we have here a revelation of his own feeling—the beauty which he saw in everything, the poetry which he wrote, what was it after all to the scientific mind but illusion and play-acting? Keats is protesting against the narrowing of reason to mean mere logical reasoning, and against the gross materialism and the increasing ugliness of his age quite as much as against the eternal opposition of cynical old age to the romantic love-follies of youth.

## PART I.

2. **Nymph and Satyr**: the nymphs were in classical mythology goddesses of mountains, lakes, woods, etc.; satyrs were beings of the woods, with pointed ears, two small horns and a tail.

3. **Oberon**: the fairy king.

5. **the Dryads and the Fauns**: the Dryads were nymphs of the trees; fauns were woodland beings, half-man, half-goat.

7. **ever-smitten Hermes**: Mercury, the messenger of the gods, ever in love: *smitten* in this sense is a vulgar colloquialism which the mature Keats would certainly not have used.

9. **Olympus**: the mountain of Thessaly in Greece on the top of which the gods were believed to live. **light**: "silently, unperceived."

10. **Jove**: Zeus, the chief of the gods, Hermes' "great summoner."

15. **Tritons**: sea-deities, the top half of which was man, while below the waist they were fish.

16. **wither'd**: because out of their native water.

19. **Muse**: the nine Muses presided over poetry, music, the arts and sciences.

23. winged heels : Hermes is always represented with wings at his ankles.

38. wreathed tomb : *i.e.* the snake's twisted body.

46. cirque-couchant : "lying curled in a circle."

47. gordian : "intricate, twisted," in reference to the knot which the Phrygian king Gordius tied in his harness and which Alexander cut with his sword, an oracle having declared that whoever loosened the knot would rule over all Asia.

49. pard : "leopard."

55. penanc'd lady elf : "fairy undergoing penance."

57. wannish : "pale."

58. Ariadne's tiar : the crown of Ariadne, who, after helping Theseus to escape from the labyrinth of the monster Minotaur, was deserted by him at Naxos but wedded by Dionysus, the god of wine, who placed among the stars the crown which he gave her at her wedding.

63. Proserpine . . . Silician air : Proserpine, daughter of Ceres, was gathering flowers in Sicily when Pluto, the god of the infernal regions, carried her off to be his queen.

67. stoop'd falcon : "falcon hovering in readiness for the final swoop."

74. Apollo : the god of the sun, of poetry, and of song ; also known as Phoebus (see l. 78).

81. star of Lethe : it was the duty of Hermes to lead the souls of the dead to the river Lethe in the underworld, whose waters gave oblivion.

85. Possess . . . fled : "thou shalt have whatever joy thou choosest if thou tellest me where my nymph is fled."

92. brilliance feminine : a rather tasteless abstraction, though probably due to Miltonic influence.

103. blear'd Silenus : Silenus, one of the satyrs, was a drunken, jovial, fat old man. sights : "glances."

104. Pale grew her immortality : an admirably compressed phrase for "pale grew the immortal nymph," combined with a suggestion that her very immortality was growing faint.

107. weird : two syllables.

114. psalterian : *i.e.* melodious as the notes of the psaltery, an ancient Jewish stringed instrument.

115. Circean : Circe was an enchantress who turned men into animals.

116. live damask : "vivid red."

131. printless verdure : "greensward unmarked by footprints."

133. lythe Caducean charm : the spell of his slender caduceus or wand round which were twined two serpents.



138. fearful : " full of fear."

148. besprent : " sprinkled."

155. Volcanian : " as from a volcano " ; see l. 157.

156. milder-mooned : see l. 136.

158. brede : " embroidery," hence " ornamentation."

163. rubious-argent : reddish silver.

167. luting : " sounding like a lute."

174. Cenchreas : Cenchreae was the East harbour of Corinth ;  
*Cleonae* (l. 179) was a town on the road from Corinth to Argos.

182. passionate : " gave way to passion, grief."

188. Spread . . . minstrelsy : " danced in a green skirt to the minstrels' music."

191. sciential . . . pain : " full of knowledge sufficient to disentangle joy from the pain into which it so easily changes."

193-4. estrange . . . counterchange : " make the points where they meet strangers to each other (*i.e.* keep them apart), and prevent the interchange between them which can so quickly take place."

195. Intrigue . . . chaos : " entangle the fair-seeming confusion of joy and pain and place in their proper places even those atoms of each feeling whose nature is most obscure."

198. unshent : " unharmed."

206. Elysium : part of the lower world, the abode of the spirits of the Blessed.

207. Nereids : sea-nymphs, sisters of Thetis, and daughters of Nereus and Doris.

209. Bacchus : the god of wine.

210. glutinous pine : an allusion to the pitchy nature of the pine tree.

211. Pluto : the god of the underworld. palatine : invested with royal privileges.

212. Mulciber's . . . line : the alexandrine here echoes the sense. *Mulciber* : a surname of Vulcan, the god of fire, and the artist of the gods : he made all the Olympian palaces. *piazzian* : connected with *piazza*—a walk under a roof supported by pillars.

217. envious race : " race of those anxious for victory and envious of others' success."

219. swooning : all Keats's lovers swoon readily ; perhaps his own ill-health made the idea of swooning come more readily to him than to the normal man.

220. moth-time : " the time when moths come forth "—an exquisite phrase.

225. Egina : a rocky island in a bay of the Aegean Sea.

229. better'd his desire : " gave him a better boon than he had asked."

230. *made retire from* : "retired from, left."

235-6. *His . . . shades* : his fancy strayed and, like reason, lost itself in the doubtful philosophic speculations of Plato (429-347 B.C.), the great disciple of Socrates, who taught in the shady groves of Athens.

240. *neighbour'd* : "near, like a neighbour."

244. *syllabing* : "speaking" ; the word has four syllables.

246. *be* : *i.e.* "let there be."

248. *But Orpheus-like . . . Eurydice* : *i.e.* like one devoured by love. Eurydice having died, her husband Orpheus descended to the underworld, and by his wonderful harping gained permission for Eurydice to follow him back to the world above, provided he did not look at her until they regained daylight. On the way back, however, he could not refrain from looking round at her, and thus lost her for ever.

256. *she saw . . . sure* : "she saw that he was fast caught in the bonds of love."

260. *To thy . . . obey* : "thy streams will obey thee even if thou commandest when far away from them."

265. *Pleiad* : the Pleiades were the daughters of Atlas and Pleione ; they were metamorphosed into doves and placed among the stars.

275. *To . . . home* : "to blunt my memory of my delicate home" ; *nice* is probably another transferred epithet : otherwise *nice* may be taken as *exact*, *precise*.

293. *amenity* : "pleasure, delight."

313-14. *Days . . . love* : "days as happy as money could provide for one without love."

317. *Venus* : the goddess of love ; she fell in love with Adonis, who was killed by a boar : his death and return to life were celebrated in annual festivals ; hence *Adonian feast* (l. 320).

329. *Peris* : in Persian mythology a fairy, a descendant of a fallen spirit excluded from Paradise.

330. *such a treat* : a touch of vulgar colloquialism, probably due to the influence of Leigh Hunt : so, too, *half a fright* in l. 335 : the whole of this passage (330-9) is in poor taste.

333. *Pyrrha's pebbles* : according to classical mythology there was a flood in which all except Deucalion and Pyrrha were destroyed : Pyrrha created a fresh race by throwing over her shoulders stones which changed into women ; in the same way Deucalion created men.

345. *made by a spell the triple . . . paces* : "by magic made the distance, three leagues, shrink into a few steps." *surmised* : this elliptically qualifies the idea in the whole preceding sentence—Lycius did not guess what she had done.

347. comprized : "absorbed."

359. *their* : this refers to *men* and *women* in l. 355.

381. slabbed : "covered with slabs of stone."

386. Aeolian : "made by the wind Aeolus."

394. *but* : "except that." *flitter-winged* : either "bat-winged" and hence "gloomy," *flittermouse* meaning *bat*; or else "fluttering from subject to subject" : the word appears to be coined by Keats.

## PART II.

6. *non-elect* : "those who are not love's chosen" ; the phrase originates in the Calvinistic theological doctrine that certain people are elect or chosen by God for salvation, the rest of mankind being damned.

8. *given . . . a fresh frown* : frowned upon or disputed the moral that love in a palace is torment.

9. *clench'd it quite* : "completely confirmed it."

10. *hiss* : with anger ; in view of Lamia's origin, the word is here strikingly appropriate.

26. *slope* : "sloping," a word borrowed by Keats from Milton.

35. *so arguing* : qualifying *this*.

36. *emperry* : "empire, rule."

39. *That . . . bell* : "that even a moment's reflection tolls the knell (*i.e.* means the death) of passion."

47. *Where . . . paradise* : the reference is of course to the reflection of his face in miniature in her eyes.

48. *silver planet* : "star."

53. *labyrinth* : "hide, as in a labyrinth."

57-60. What mortal hath a prize which may make other men abashed and confused with envy and yet keeps it hid from sight ?

76. *sanguineous* : "flushed with angry blood."

81. *burnt* : *i.e.* with love.

90. *cited earth* : probably *cited* is a transferred epithet meaning "who should be summoned," and belongs to *friends or kinsfolk*.

98. *list* : "please."

107. *shut* : "close," the word in this connection is Milton's.

122-3. The faery-roof was perhaps supported only by music.

136. *mission'd* : "sent."

137. *fretted* : "ornamented."

141. *And . . . intricacies* : "and interwove small designs with the large ones."

142. *faded at self-will* : "departed, to satisfy her own wish, from the crowded haunt of men ; shut herself up in solitude."

146. gossip : "friendly" ; originally one related in God, *i.e.* a sponsor.

155. demesne : "dominion."

160. daft : "baffled."

172. sophist : the Greek sophists taught philosophy and rhetoric ; from the tendency of some to quibbling our modern meaning of the word—captious and insincere reasoner—is derived. spleen : the spleen was formerly thought to be the seat of anger.

185. libbard : "leopard."

187. Ceres : the goddess of earth and the protectress of agriculture (*cp. cereal*). horn : "horn of plenty, cornucopia."

190. shrining : "holding as in a shrine."

200. While . . . undersong : *i.e.* the guests were fluently talking Greek, a language full of sonorous vowels.

207. nectareous cheer : "food and drink tasting like nectar, the wondrous drink of the gods."

213. Soon . . . height : *i.e.* soon they had drunk deeply. Bacchus : the god of wine. meridian height : mid-day height, *i.e.* the highest point.

220. fancy-fit : "fit according to his fancy."

224. willow : symbol of desertion and unrequited love. adder's tongue : to recall her serpent origin.

226. thyrsus : a staff entwined with ivy and vine leaves and grapes, with a cone at the top, carried at the festivals of Bacchus.

238. spear-grass : long, stiff grass : both this and the prickly thistle inflict pain.

229-38. Do not . . . shade : it is reported that Keats and Lamb at one of the meetings at Haydon's house, agreed that Sir Isaac Newton, the great scientist, "had destroyed all the poetry of the rainbow, by reducing it to the prismatic colours."

236. gnomed : "filled with gnomes" ; it was supposed that gnomes worked the metals underground.

274-5. no passion . . . vision : "no passion lighted her eyes, deep-sunk in her head."

288. possess'd : *i.e.* possessed by an evil spirit.

299. breath'd death-breath : "drew her last breath as a woman."

301. perceant : "piercing."





PR  
4832  
H599

Keats, John  
Hyperion

PLEASE DO NOT REMOVE  
CARDS OR SLIPS FROM THIS POCKET

---

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO LIBRARY

---

